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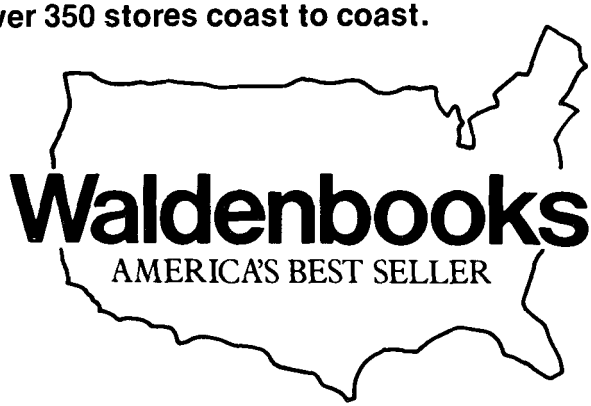

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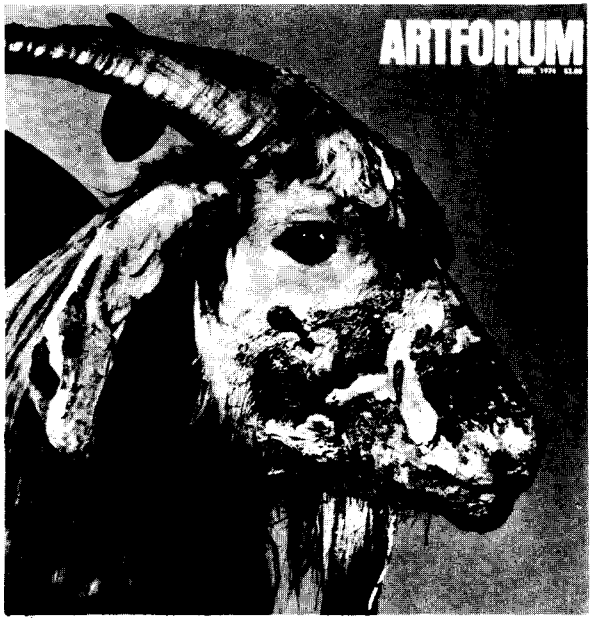

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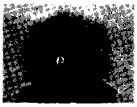
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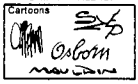

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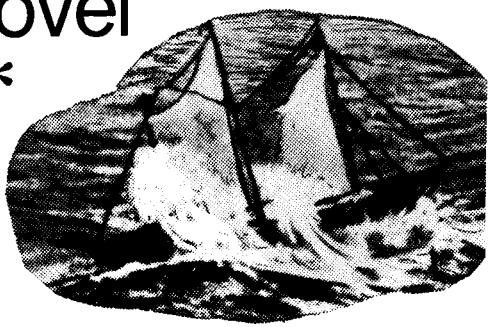

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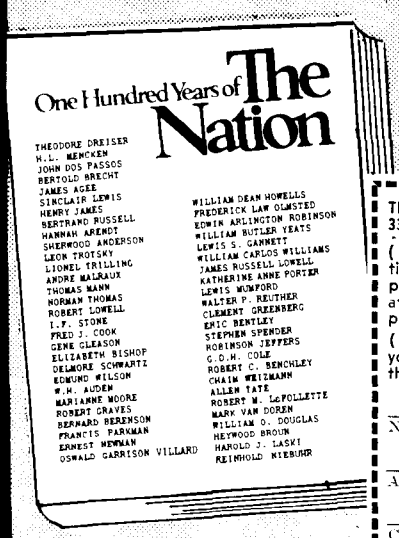

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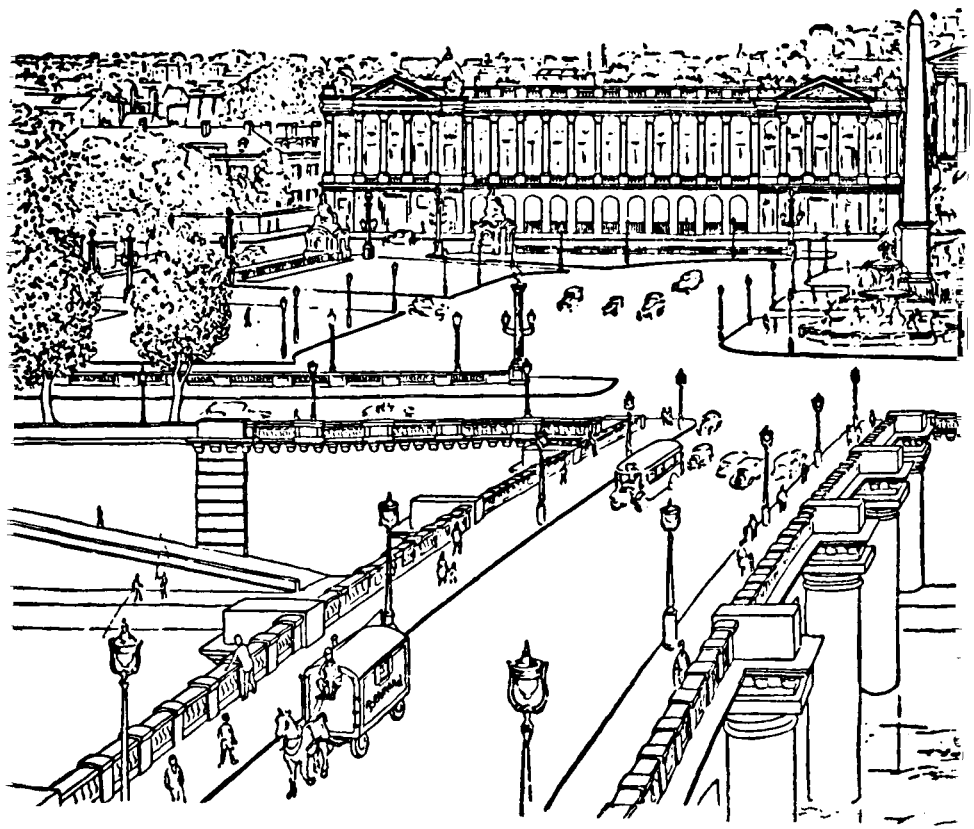

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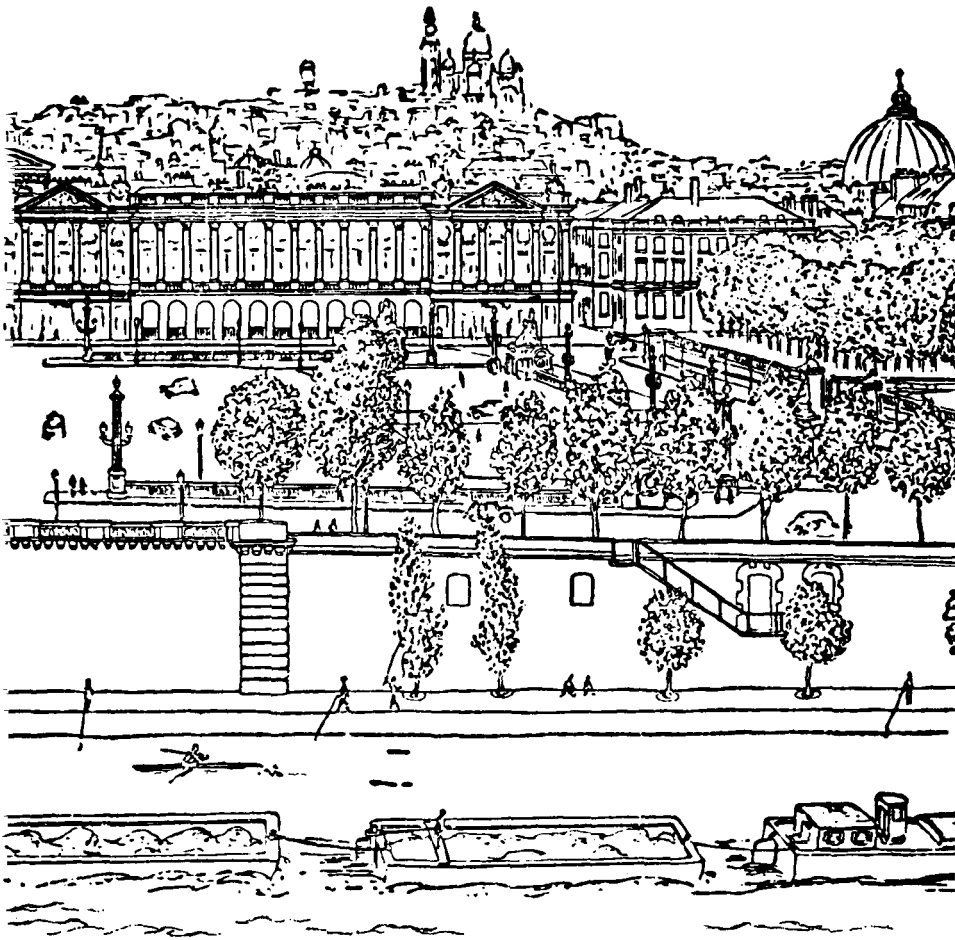

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Interview

James Wright	*The Art of Poetry XIX*	34

Art

Christo	*Leaning Over the Running Fence*	131
Donald Evans	*A Portfolio of Stamps of the World*	75

Fiction

Joe Brainard	*The Friendly Way (Continued)*	139
Ken Brower	*Time and the Jungle*	88
France Burke	*In the Footprints of the Dinosaur*	108
Richard Ford	*Shooting the Rest Area*	154
Alan Friedman	*Prelude to a Glorious Fugue*	20
Gretchen Herbkersman	*Thor*	124

Portfolio

James Wright	*Ten Poems*	62

Poetry

Diane Ackerman	*Still Life*	97
Georgia Alwan	*Children/Evolutions*	117
Susan Bartels	*All My Orifices Are Too Small*	103
Stuart Dybek	*Sunday at the Zoo*	143
Dean Faulwell	*Two Poems*	144
Linda Gregg	*Sigismundo*	146
Tom Hansen	*Final Instructions for the Magician*	121
Jonathan Holden	*Roller Coaster*	100
Paul Hoover	*Two Poems*	114
Vickie Karp	*A Three Weeks Love Poem*	147
Joan Larkin	*Self-Pity*	148
Naomi Lazard	*Grand Opening*	98
Jay Meek	*Two Poems*	112
Eric Overmyer	*I Don't Eat Tuna Anymore*	152
Peter Payack	*The Ultimate Party*	107
Steven Rea	*Two Poems*	104
Dennis Schmitz	*Tattoo Artist*	119
W. I. Scobie	*Two Poems*	149
Albert Stainton	*A Garnished Peach at the Grand-Hotel Poland*	102
Barry Yourgrau	*Femmes Fatales No. 1*	145

Notes on Contributors 168

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Prelude to a Glorious Fugue

Alan Friedman

I have short hair and under my strong brows, two honest Indian-bead eyes. My face is subtle, fretful, and quick. But my flesh is weak and my spirit uncertain and by now the legend written across my smile must evidently be "Tread on me." The awful part of it is, I noticed even before he asked me how to get to thirty-fourth street that he was definitely not a type you go out with. He had the face of a star. Long pink lips with an extra bend or two. And a chin like the pry end of a hammer. "One gets so turned about in your subways," he creaked melodiously. And milky eyes. An oven door opened, hot air gusted, *Vogue* began to blow, perfect hungry women were running across my lap and leaping the stile of my knees. I'd lost my place. He crooned with queer accent something: "Are you native here in New York?" Or it might have been: "Do you hate it here in New York?" The lights went out. God, what did one say? "You're visiting the United States?" I am terribly highpitched, and witless in the dark. The lights went on. I was staring at his eyebrows. In them,

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sweat like misplaced tears.

I feast on Sunday, fast on Monday, perspire on Tuesday, desire all Wednesday, despair by Thursday, and prepare each Friday (hidden in the agency library where I consume iced coffee all day long) miracles of medical advertising copy—"pre-TENSE eliminates the past TENSE in TENSion. And leaves attention unimpaired." Layout—photo cut of bewildered young woman; suggest ink drawing of ganglion across her face.

So I gave him my phone number. I am low-bred, open-hearted, and partial to foreigners.

And in the middle of all that heat, Saturday, he phoned. I was showering. I took his name, by now forgotten, from dictation. Ferenci? English? I stared at the wet pad after I hung up. He worked for the BBC in London, he said. So stupidly, on account of his British hornpipe or whatever the tune that served his voice, I overdressed. I dressed to meet a spy.

It was after five when I got to the Statler. Over the noisy house phone he said, "Won't you come up? I'm washing the jelly."

"What?"

"I said come up. Drinks up here."

But when I opened the door he was not the man I'd met. I refused to enter the room—rooms, a suite, people, noise, a party in full gallop. Near the door of the salon, watching TV, sat this most unpleasantly handsome type. Ferenci without a doubt—I did and did not recognize him.

He had pocky, sweaty, luminous flesh. His eyes worked independently of his mouth, his oval eyes and wiggly mouth were thinking separate thoughts. His lower lip had tiny unshaved fish barbels bristling beneath it. How it could be that he was still attractive for all this, it's impossible to say. But he was, in a razorlike way that made my skin back up. He leaned from the TV set—towards me in the doorway—with a spine more flexible than any I'd ever seen, swaying slightly, awash with currents. He wore a T-shirt (a T-shirt!) over an assertive chest and when he spoke, his periscoping mouth

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unshuttered, galactic with teeth. "Tell us who you are," he said to me. "Even myself, I hardly know you." Looking back, I wonder if I could have guessed that they were putting me through a test.

The dark girl sitting across the room on the sofa said with the sudden amazing force of a practiced elocutionist, making her nostrils flare, "Darling, give me a cigarette." To me?

"Do close the door." Ferenci more friendly.

"What's your first name?" I logically demanded.

Not immediately, he turned off the set. "Maurice." It was almost Morris. "Why?" he said.

"And Ferenci? You're Italian?"

"Does it matter? Come in now, do, dear. I'm one tablespoon English, two teaspoons Italian, and a teaspoon Ferenczy," he gargled. "Father was Hungarian, but he changed the spelling when he came to Italy. That's where he met mother. Dear, do come in."

I did. And sat. In a straight chair. A man motionless on the sofa exclaimed, "I'm *Kenneth!*" He had damp flesh. His features were pulled wide apart like a stretched sweater, and at once I distrusted him. He inquired solicitously, "Do you like it here at the Statler?"

I said, astonished, "Yes." For no reason.

"Good!" And out of the back room noisy with dance music, someone with lustrous pants and purple shirt, with swarthy skin and long curling sideburns, snaked across the carpet to meet me. In the midst of one gyration he captured a glass from the coffeetable and sat. We were introduced.

"Reynold's a painter," my Ferenci explained, handing me a drink.

He was followed out of the back room by a blonde girl who chose her seat carefully, sitting first near me, then on second thought between the dark girl and Kenneth on the sofa. "Who's this girl?" Reynold said. I thought he might mean her. She had golden down on the sides of her arms and the back of her neck, the kind that glints under light. She frowned and refocused her contact lenses. Reynold's voice lilted, "Who

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are you?'' He came spinning at me like a trout line. ''I've got to know you. I'm not going to let anyone sit here hiding her identity.'' Undulating, he got down on the floor next to my chair. ''Let's see your legs. Let's see.'' And he put his head in my lap, running his hand up my ankle.

I flushed into sweat. I tried to push him off, but instead pushed chair and table. Glasses flashed. ''I'm going to leave,'' I explained. My instincts are sound.

Soothingly, Ferenci took my hand. I didn't want him to take my hand. For one thing, my hand was wet. ''Did he shock you?''

''As a matter of fact, yes.'' The right answer, it turned out.

Reynold rose from the floor and swayed toward Kenneth. ''Isn't that why you practice medicine?''

''Yes, medicine is a basic form of epistemology,'' Kenneth pronounced.

''I had to know if she was fat, didn't I?''

''It's all right now,'' Maurice said, elegant screen star. He was the most preferable man in the room. I looked from that immobile face to the others, Kenneth's, the blonde girl's, the dark girl's. The blonde girl said nothing that whole time, but her orange jumper recited passionately for her. Its articulation revealed rich communications taking place on the sofa between herself and Kenneth. On the other side the two women were holding hands.

''Nita's fat,'' Reynold confided to me. The dark girl was 'Nita.

Even in this heat she was wearing a shapeless sweater. ''It's not fat,'' she boomed to me. ''It's his baby I'm carrying in there.'' Her jaw clearly indicated Kenneth. For reasons now known to me, she told me this venomously, a warning rattle in her throat.

Ferenci said quietly, his lips to his glass, ''Keep your eyes on Kenneth. He's famous for being able to make a girl achieve her climax while sitting a foot away from her.''

I clenched my fingernails into my palms—not to move—I wouldn't have moved now if Maurice Ferenci and all the other

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chiller-killer spies who acted for the BBC in London had been pulling hairs out of my head.

The blonde girl set fire to the cigarette pack in the ashtray, she gave me a meaningful look, signifying, I believe, nothing, the cellophane began turning brown, and Kenneth spoke expansively, "Reynold, listen. Maurice's new girl's wonderful." He grew lyrical, rapturous. He filled the air with conviction. "She's a *wonderful* girl!" He smiled at me. I smiled back. How had it suddenly turned out that Kenneth was on my side?

I let them bundle me into a cab, Maurice and Kenneth, I don't know why—unfed in all that dying heat, I suppose. Convinced that dinner was my due. Dr. Kenneth Garrison had invited us to come eat with him—we were on a last name basis at last—and my spy dress was soon affixed with rubber cement to the leatherette seat. I still have no idea what happened to the rest of them.

"So you met her on the subway," Dr. Garrison mused out loud. I managed to keep more than a foot away from him, thirteen inches between us, hard as this is when you are sticking to the rear seat of a cab between two men. The meter clicked on—east, across town. Dr. Garrison, I had understood, lived on the west side, uptown. I was being abducted by a Dr. Kenneth Garrison, a Mr. Maurice Ferenci, and the cabdriver? I memorized his face, name, and number on the photo.

Maurice's speaking, silent-screen eyes looked me over. His eyes said, Ah-there-are-untapped-reservoirs-within-you. He said this twice before speaking. Then he added, "You're not *really* American?"

"I'm typical U.S.A.," I announced. I had finished college. I was making money. I was on a diet.

From his corner, Dr. Kenneth said, "You've been married once, haven't you?"

Had he said that? The truck noise was ferocious—did marriage show up medically in the bloodshot corners of the eyes seven years later? And because his diagnostic stare was on my legs, I crossed them. They are slim. Beneath the knees. I

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didn't answer. Turning to the first person I ever allowed to succeed in picking me up on the subway, I saw a spot of perspiration spreading on the chest of Ferenci's T-shirt.

We got out at Madison Avenue. They took me to a hamburger joint. I hadn't the presence of mind to object. It was the smallest surprise of the evening but it left me stunned.

Hamburgers arrived. I ordered iced coffee. There was only hot coffee. I insisted on iced coffee. The red erupting crust of the dying earth could billow away for all I cared into roaring gases if I didn't get iced coffee tonight. The obliging waitress brought me a lump of ice in a spoon. My cup spilled over.

Maurice Ferenci cut his hamburger into six parts before eating it. I'm not sure I can explain why, but this made it difficult for me to swallow my own. I sat watching the two of them eat. The Hungarian-Italian-British one said, "She's a medical copywriter, Kenneth, ask her a question." Chewing pause. "A medical question."

I didn't recall discussing my job, this evening or on the subway. I had, however, other recollections. I said, "I was invited to dinner at the home of a friend of yours. A Dr. Kenneth Garrison, I believe."

The friend tightened his lips, so I knew he was going to speak. "Oh?" he said. And he called out loud to the busy waitress running across the room, "My wife Anita is pregnant. Can you bring the relish?"

The first person finished the fifth sixth, and then explained, "You see, the evening simply had to be changed. Kenneth here has two children and always when his wife is pregnant, as I'm sure he'll be the first to admit, he feels this beastly urge. This horrible strong urge to go out with other girls."

Dr. Garrison sipped. Coffee spilled from his chin. His neck was unshaved. He remarked, "Does she have any friends, Maurice?"

I said promptly, "None at all."

Maurice stared at me with his egg-white long-lashed eyes blinking slowly. "When I rang her up this afternoon she assured me" (I was the third person) "that here in America I

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was expected to come pick her up at *her* place. Is that quite, how shall I say, Kenneth—is that *usual* in your country?''

''It's guaranteed in the Constitution,'' I opined.

Finishing his sixth sixth, he looped, drooped his napkin into his waterglass, sopped, mopped his fingertips. ''Is there perhaps some superstition here, perhaps to do with meeting a man in his hotel rooms?''

The waitress removed my uneaten hamburger.

Dr. Garrison leaned and inquired darkly, ''What do *hotel rooms* mean to you?'' With deep psychoanalytic mien he urged, ''What do the words *hotel rooms* bring up to your mind?''

''Apple pie and ice cream,'' I said. Garrison stared.

''Vanilla?''

''Please.''

''We're fresh out of vanilla,'' the waitress said.

My heart broke. I sighed heavily.

Maurice patted my hand paternally and asked, ''What's the most unhappy you've ever been in your life?''

I sipped diluted coffee, second cup, and answered, ''Haven't you been married once already?''

''Of course,'' he replied, ''for six years. I've got a little sparrow of a daughter over in Milan, with her mother. I visit once a year.''

The slithery arc of his smile, the pitching and rolling of that voice, was politely British. But there was a bass, leathery strain like cargo in the hold, invisibly swaying. I touched my tongue to the ice in the bottom of my cup and my thoughts were on long marriage—my thirty-two months and twenty-five days—almost three years of tearstained tablecloths and pillowcases, blouses and handkerchiefs, sheets and kleenex—a white sale of total recall.

They let me struggle out the door first. But they guarded me one on each side. They crossed Madison Avenue with me, the three of us unswerving over its lava tar, the planet's ash still warm in our nostrils. We walked only a block to one of those splendid but badly lighted lobbies off Fifth Avenue where

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every door inside is labelled RING AND ENTER DR this, that, or another. One read DR. KENNETH GARRISON, but he stopped—key in hand—at an unmarked side door. He intoned, "Do you mind if Maurice comes with me?" I didn't mind. I wasn't lying. I rang and entered his waiting room and waited. One patient, just one to go. What doctor saw patients on Saturday night?

The woman sat reading VIVA. No wedding band, veiny ankles sticking out of polka dots. Hat and veil. She said, "Are you from out of town, too?"

"No."

"Most of Dr. Garrison's patients, I come to him once a week, it's without fail if you ask, they're from this or that state. Don't you think he's grand?"

"He's famous," I said.

A pigeonlike stare out of one eye. I bored the lady to VIVA. After a minute, "I'm not sick," she said, "it's a discomfort they don't know what to do with, believe me, I'm from Idaho, I've tried the lot of them."

But from the inner door out came Dr. Garrison in a medical gown. The Idaho lady puckered to attention. He bent over her officially and said in caressing tones, "As for you, my dear, you've been a delinquent patient, haven't you?"

"My vacation—"

"My dear, you ought to cancel—"

"But I did, I did cancel—"

"Did you. Well, you're in luck, because we have with us in the office this evening," she rose, and he took her by the hand, "a visiting specialist from England."

A queasy emptiness in my stomach like an elevator dropping under me. He had sucked the lady from Idaho out through the door. I felt I ought to call for help, I ought to phone Bernie or Lyon or mother or leave. But I sat. Ferenci: the visiting specialist from England.

On the empty receptionist's desk in the waiting room, the yellow phone rang softly. When it stopped, I heard the sounds of running water and voices inside . . . then coughing . . . a

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short scream. I got up quick and pressed my ear to the inner door very hard, so hard that my earlobe, still infected, just where I'd had to pull the earring out last week, hurt. Tittering. I heard it distinctly. Had the little scream before been a little laugh? And then abruptly, close to my wall, in clearly fainting tones, "Oh Doctor! Oh Doctor!" the ladylike voice from Idaho, "Is this the British method?"

I took the leatherette chair farthest from that wall and picked up a magazine and started a crossword puzzle.

When Maurice finally reappeared, he came in wearing a white medical gown. "Have you been bored?" He was—yes, almost new again. I had not really remembered him. His once elongated lips were cherub-small. His little fish bristles were gone. His eyes quivered sensitively, happily, as he breathed through his mouth. English promises. "We'll be going downtown presently. Kenneth'll be along. Hold on tight. Gear little palace he's got on to. Like to cast an eye around? Make a splendid set, now wouldn't it just?"

And so on. I saw nothing but gear, and nothing splendid—a tour of the inner office rooms, Maurice bouncing alongside as if he had sneakers on. He kept pushing the flat of his hand to the small of my back. Three or four drab air conditioned rooms. Every air conditioner made unpleasant noises—different ones—scales, cabinets, examining tables, fluoroscope, sterilizers—I stood on the second scale I saw and slid the weights across the bars. "Go away—over *there*," I squeaked. "The other side of the room. I want to check my bathroom scale at home. Stop that."

He said, "I want to check up on *this* scale," weighing my rear, "an old-fashioned method is best."

It is very hard for me to give up a man, harder than you will believe. Visiting specialist? "Do I or don't I remember your telling me you worked for the BBC in London?"

"Dear, do I or don't I remember there's a little question of *mine?*"

What question. Something about unhappiness. "Are you an actor?" I insisted.

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"God no! Exchange programs between the BBC and your American channels. That's why I'm here, you see?"

"You said you were here on vacation."

His good humor vanished. "Now that will do, dear, I dislike to be harried and pounced on before I'm actually married."

Had he said that? My shoulders snapped back so fast they hurt. I said, "Would you please turn off that *air conditioner?*"

He stared. His cheerfulness returned. "Of course. Why?" He made no move.

"Because I want to hear what you're saying and it's louder than you are. You're a medical specialist from England, according to Dr. Garrison?" A few facts were in order.

He snickered unexpectedly. "Oh that. No of course not, that was Kenneth's sick little joke. Are you annoyed? Kenneth has rather an original sense of comedy. He had me floating about in there with her, wearing this doctor's smock and sporting a stethoscope." He took off the medical gown. Down to his T-shirt again. "Then he suggests out loud I take his patient's blood pressure. I was caught a bit off guard, you know."

Was it a sick joke only? It was a bad dream. Maurice was almost giggling—a staccato leap up from his Adam's apple, a plucked string. "Do you realize," I unashamedly moralized, "that for letting you practice medicine without a license, he can be sued for malpractice?"

"Listen, do you know how to turn this off?" The air conditioner. He pinched and pulled at a knob, gave up, and turned back to me, his mouth an inch from mine so I thought he was going to kiss me, and said, "This entire marvelous office is quack-quack-quack," he tootled like a duck. "Didn't you guess? Malpractice, my dear, is hardly the word for it!"

"He's a faith-healer?"

"Nothing so useful. He rents this office at mountainous sums from an acquaintance, some young intern or resident who's a genuine physician, or so I hear. Kenneth's tastes are somewhat specialized, and since fortunately he has his wife Anita's inheritance now, you see . . ." again the plucked

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guitar snicker, "this friend of his is taking some sort of postdoctoral degree in psychiatry on *Kenneth's* money, and Ken has simply taken over his office. Not his practice. Kenneth's patients are actually his own, they get sent to him from hotels, ladies all, he kicks back part of the fee to the hotel desk clerks, and the most unbelievable part in all this is, you know dear, they *do keep coming back* to him, the ladies do."

The nearest chair on the other side of Maurice was too far away, and besides, it had by now become a test of endurance. "You're telling me that Kenneth in there isn't a doctor?"

Saliva flashed on his cheery lips. "His Doctor, that's authentic. But not in medicine. Kenneth's a Ph.D. In psychology—he does analysis with patients at a clinic. He's just started. That's how he met this what's-his-name doctor, he won't reveal the name."

I had to sit. I sidled past. He patted me again as I moved but that was the least of it—physician, psychiatrist, psychologist. "He'll be arrested. Both of them."

"I doubt it. This doctor who sublets to Kenneth isn't legally required to check on Kenneth's license, one couldn't expect that, and Ken's bloody careful about things like prescriptions, he writes only—damn it!—prescriptions for mineral salts and fishfoods. Sssssss!"

The "damn it!" seemed to have stopped the machine, it sighed to silence. Maurice's reptile warning must have meant "Shhhhh!" because he slipped immediately to a closed door I hadn't noticed and flattened himself to it in a fluid movement that was not without grace. Like me? I have never seen anyone so two-dimensional, so flat against a door. More expert than me. Oppressed, I saw his knack for making me feel in cahoots with him.

He whispered, barely moving his lips, "He's still in there with her!"

The truth, maybe the lady had come for a fix, heroin from Idaho? I am skeptical. I sat. I stood. I said deliberately loud, "But why? I mean—to be crude about it—what's in it for him? He's a psychologist. The professional and legal risks, they're

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enormous.''

He came away from the door and spoke softly, indulgently, ''Kenneth says he's a frustrated physician at heart. But between me and you, dear, he enjoys giving people a mild hurt now and again. He never does them serious harm. It's not easy, you know, to find willing victims, and it's hard for him to live without. That's why he's becoming an analyst.''

I tried my best. ''Is that the British method, Doctor?''

I'd admitted eavesdropping. He didn't care. He confessed, too, ''Oh Doctor! Oh Doctor! Lord, she was terrible. That was when I put that elastic blood-pressure thing round her thigh. Believe me, it was a relief for both of us. Because first, wouldn't you know, I'd wound that rubber apparatus so tight round the old bird's arm, she turned green when I inflated it and started whistling through her teeth. I couldn't get the damn thing off her arm, I had it so twisted. There's a button you press, this I find out later, but Kenneth don't even show by a sign, and all this while the old girl's huffing away in a ghastly pathetic fright.''

Weep or shrug? Be sick or be calm? My logic was impeccable. ''I'm afraid either I don't understand you,'' I said, ''or else I'm afraid I do.''

He gave me a slow gentlemanly smile and squint—sign language—with a sliding back of the head that meant come here. I didn't. He said, ''How about you?''

I concluded, ''I don't understand.''

He stroked the spot beneath his luxurious lower lip reflectively, apparently concentrating on the problem he had about shaving himself there. ''With your husband, let me ask you, did you ever enjoy reaching that climax they talk about?''

I answered not one word.

''Men have that trouble, too,'' he said.

I searched his mushroom chin, his nightshade cheeks, for traces of humor. None.

''I'm that way—'' he confided, ''like you—the other way.'' I'd heard every word, the air conditioner was off, there could be no mistake. He said, ''I know more than you imagine—

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about you—that first moment on the subway, I don't know how I knew, but it's in your face, it's in that voice you have, I hear it, it's like hearing music."

"What music?"

"A prelude."

He said that. I paused, a thoughtful two-measure rest. "It may not matter to you at all that I don't want to have anything further to do with you."

"No, it doesn't matter," he said. "I knew perfectly, I didn't need to be told how much and how little anxious you were to see me this evening. That's precisely why I rang you up. When I can think of anything else you'll detest, I'll ask you to do that, too."

I am not entirely without insight. This imported man, I guessed what power he had over me. The power of my own revulsion. "'Is that why you brought me *here?*"

He replied indirectly. "Why not do this," he suggested, "why not cancel all your plans for tomorrow, Sunday, come to my hotel room all the day, you'll have a glorious time."

"No."

"At eleven in the morning."

Nor am I normally weak in the shins.

"It will be disagreeable for you," he said, "very disagreeable, you'll have to ask for my room number, for you see, I won't tell you it again now, and the desk clerk will give you a knowing stare, my room at eleven in the morning or even at ten, and upstairs the women maids on my floor will all stand there, looking you over, watching you as you go hunting down the hall, looking for my room number." While speaking, he lit a cigarette. He lay down on the examining table and stretched out—smoking, flat, absorbed in his prediction. "There are some women, you know, who can't enjoy themselves unless—" the smoke over his face flickered. "It seems a pity not to try to find out."

I thought I'd missed a sentence. "Find out what?"

"There's so little time. I'm going back to London."

"I've been propositioned before," I said. "This one comes

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with a time limit.''

Coldblooded, he inquired, ''With your husband, did it ever really hurt?''

I saw him now, a polished statue that had been left out of doors for centuries and had got chipped in the genitals. He was saying, ''The number of things two people can do together is limited. But the frightfulness in it for both of them can be pretty much without limit.'' That much I knew. It had been coming at me from a long way, from childhood or farther back, from history and fairytales, from a thousand and one nights.

''I hope you'll all be arrested tomorrow,'' I keened. In my sorrow I hoped that even the lady from Idaho would be convicted. And me too.

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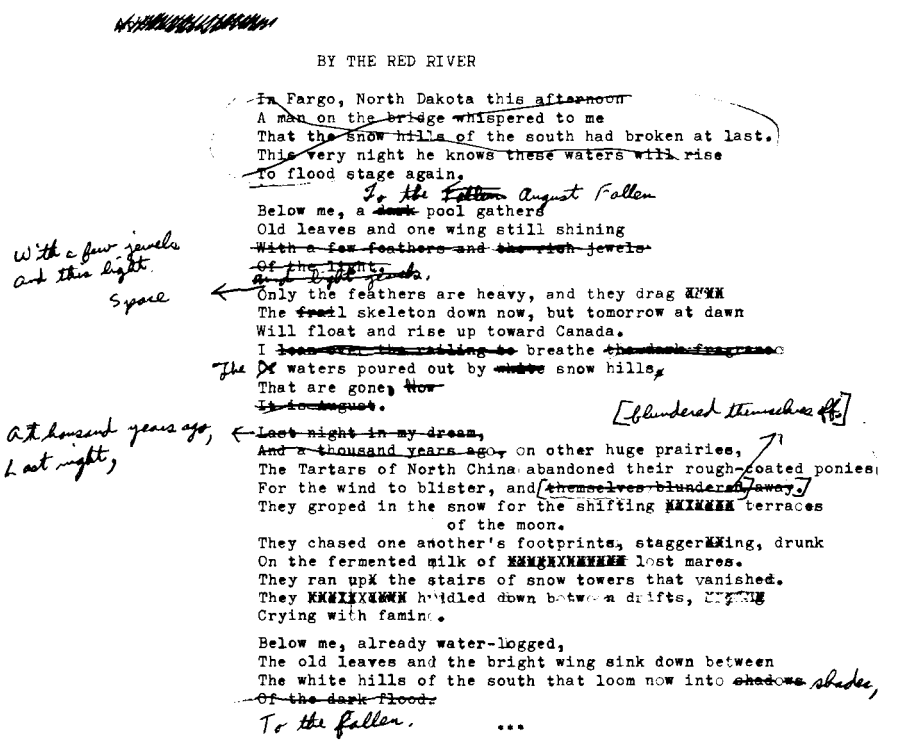

BY THE RED RIVER

In Fargo, North Dakota this afternoon
A man on the bridge whispered to me
That the snow hills of the south had broken at last.
This very night he knows these waters will rise
To flood stage again.

To the Fallen August Fallen

Below me, a dark pool gathers
Old leaves and one wing still shining
With a few jewels and this light.
With a few feathers and the rich jewels
Of the light,
And light yards.
Only the feathers are heavy, and they drag
The frail skeleton down now, but tomorrow at dawn
Will float and rise up toward Canada.
I [illegible] breathe the dank fragrance
The [illegible] waters poured out by [illegible] snow hills,
That are gone, Now
It is August.

[Blundered themselves]

At a thousand years ago,
Last night,
Last night in my dream,
And a thousand years ago, on other huge prairies,
The Tartars of North China abandoned their rough-coated ponies
For the wind to blister, and [themselves blundered away.]
They groped in the snow for the shifting [illegible] terraces
of the moon.
They chased one another's footprints, staggering, drunk
On the fermented milk of [illegible] lost mares.
They ran up the stairs of snow towers that vanished.
They [illegible] huddled down between drifts, [illegible]
Crying with famine.

Below me, already water-logged,
The old leaves and the bright wing sink down between
The white hills of the south that loom now into shadows shades,
Of the dark flood.
To the fallen. ...

From "By the Red River" which became "Living by the Red River," published in Shall We Gather at the River.

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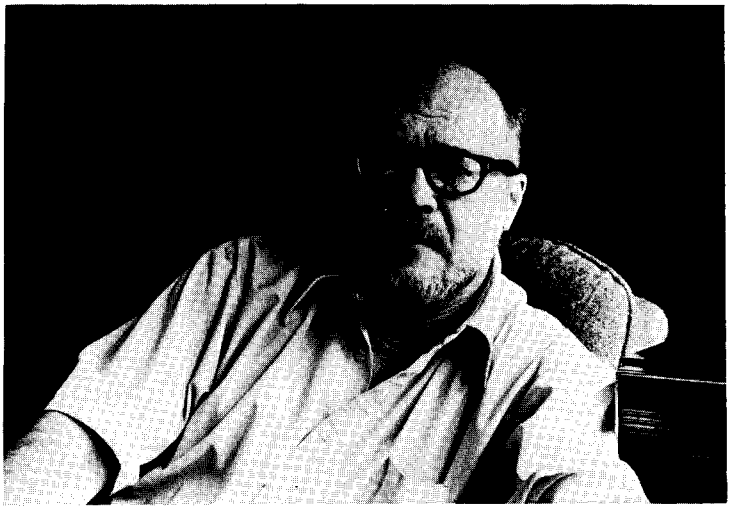
The Art of Poetry XIX

James Wright



Gerard Malanga

Early in 1972—following the publication, in April, 1971, of his Collected Poems—*James Wright was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize for poetry and the 1972 Fellowship of the Academy of American Poets. The latter was awarded "for distinguished poetic achievement" by a panel of judges consisting of W.H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, and Richard Wilbur.*

Thus a considerable measure of public recognition was given to a poet already widely admired, especially on the college and university campuses. In an age when, much to our loss, many fine poets find their books out of print, Mr. Wright's earlier volumes—The Green Wall (*1957*), Saint Judas (*1959*), The

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Branch Will Not Break (*1963*), *and* Shall We Gather at the River (*1968*)—*all have gone through more than one printing.*

The following interview took place at Mr. Wright's Manhattan apartment in early spring. The apartment is on the ground floor, and so, as we sat talking, we were able to look out through the (inevitably) barred windows at the small back garden and see, occasionally, the sunlight slanting between the surrounding buildings.

On the first day we held two sessions, separated by a walk in a nearby park on the East River and an excellent lunch prepared by Mrs. Wright. On the second, a misty, rainy day, we held one long afternoon session. On the table between us lay the tape recorder, the interviewer's notes, a diminishing and then replenished gallon of wine, and Mr. Wright's cigarettes and ash tray.

During the interview, Mr. Wright quoted many poems and prose passages as examples of points he was making. The interviewer later spent several hours in the library looking up and checking these quotations. The effort was unnecessary, as, except for a word here and there, Mr. Wright's versions were always accurate. In the interest of conserving space, and because most of them are readily available elsewhere, several of these pieces have been cut. Those which are especially important to the interview as a whole remain as illustrations of Mr. Wright's remarkable memory.

The unedited transcript of the interview typed out to eighty-three pages. Rigorous, and painful, editing brought this down to a managable size, and the resulting version was sent to Mr. Wright. He returned it two weeks later, having added a few sentences and deleted a few others. That version, finally, is the one printed here.

INTERVIEWER

Mr. Wright, you taught at the University of Minnesota with John Berryman. What is your feeling about him as a poet?

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WRIGHT

John Berryman was a very great poet and I think his work is going to endure. And not just because he was a good craftsman, but because he was demonstrating in his poetry, I think without realizing it completely, the fact that a poem is not only a single thing that can be made and very beautifully constructed, but that poetry is also something that can go on being made and it can almost reach a point where it recreates itself. By the growth of his work, and he never stopped growing, he was showing that there is something about poetry in the human imagination which is like the spring. Dr. Williams is a great poet for the same reason.

Tolstoy worried about this question. He was asked in a letter by a pacifist group if he could give them a definition of religion and, if he could do that, to explain to them the relation between religion, that is, what a person believes, and morality, that is, the way he acts in accord with some notion of how he ought to act. Tolstoy worried about this letter, and then as I recall it, he said: "I can only go back to myself. I look around myself and I see every year that, no matter what people do to themselves and to one another, the spring constantly renews itself. This is a physical fact, not a metaphysical theory. I look at every spring and I respond to it very strongly. But I also notice that every year the spring is the same new spring and every year I am one year older. I have to ask the question: what is the relation between my brief and tragic life and this force in the universe that perpetually renews itself? I further believe that every human being asks this question. He cannot avoid asking it—it is forced upon him. And his answer to that question is his religion. If he says the relation between me and this thing is nothing, then his religion is nihilism. As for morality, what ought I to do? I wish I knew." That was a great letter.

Berryman's greatness included of course his utter mastery of the craft of the language. But he also was demonstrating that poetry is not simply an ornament, that poetry has some deep-rooted relation to life itself, the way we go on living.

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INTERVIEWER

What is it to be a poet?

WRIGHT

I can only tell you what it is to me. I regard myself primarily as a craftsman, as a Horatian. My favorite poet is Edward Thomas, and the person whom I would like to be my master is Horace—Horace, who was able to write humorously and kindly in flawless verse. I've achieved that maybe twice in my life, but that is what I would like to be.

Of course there are many other kinds of poets. There is Jack Finnegan for example. Jack Finnegan is a friend of mine, a learned gentleman whom I sometimes meet at Jack Loftus' Bar. There is a tradition in Irish poetry in which the poem itself is an answer to a question which someone has posed. Somebody says to a guy who is standing in a bar: what are you doing with those dice? The guy turns and says:

God rest that Jewy woman,
Queen Jezebel, the bitch
Who peeled the clothes from her shoulder-bones
Down to her spent teats
As she stretched out of the window
Among the geraniums, where
She chaffed and laughed like one half daft
Titivating her painted hair—

King Jehu he drove to her,
She tipped him a fancy beck;
But he from his knacky side-car spoke,
'Who'll break that dewlapped neck?'
And so she was thrown from the window;
Like Lucifer she fell
Beneath the feet of the horses and they beat
The light out of Jezebel.

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That corpse wasn't planted in clover;
Ah, nothing of her was found
Save those grey bones that Hare-foot Mike
Gave me for their lovely sound;
And as once her dancing body
Made star-lit princes sweat,
So I'll just clack: though her ghost lacks a back
There's music in the old bones yet.

Which is a way of saying, "You sing your business and I'll sing mine." The poem, by the way, is "Song for the Clatter-Bones" by the Irish poet F.R. Higgins.

Well, I thought it was only a literary convention, and you're not going to believe this, but I swear in the sight of God that it is the truth. I went over to Loftus' the other day, and I saw Jack Finnegan. I said, "Jack, how are you?" "O.K., Professor," he said, "how are you?" Then I asked him a question—and by God it turned out to be a living thing. He could not have known what question I was going to ask him. I said, "Jack, what do you think about Nixon's visit to China?" And he turned to me and very beautifully sang:

In Peking's fair city
Where the girls are so slitty
'Twas there I met witty
Miss Molly Wong Wong.

She drove a wheel barrow
Through streets broad and narrow
Singing Szechuan, Peking,
Alive a long dong.

Alive a long dong,
Alive a long dong,
Crying Szechuan, Peking,
Alive a long dong.

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He sang it on the spot. What was I going to say to him? Jack, you made it up? Of course he made it up, he made it up on the spot. I was present at the creation.

There is another Irish tradition I'd like to mention. It is based on sheer arrogance, the determination to live. Poetry can keep life itself alive. You can endure almost anything as long as you can sing about it. Do you know Raftery? Anthony Raftery, from the eighteenth century, blind and illiterate, who carried a hand harp. He was standing in a bar and someone asked, who is that poor, frail old man leaning there in the corner with a harp in his hand? Raftery turned around and said: "I am Raftery, the poet, full of hope and love, with no light in my eyes, and with gentleness that has no misery, going west upon my pilgrimage by the light of my heart, though feeble and tired to the end of my road, and behold me now, with my back to the wall, playing music unto empty pockets."*

INTERVIEWER

Do you find being a poet painful, like playing music to empty pockets with your back to the wall?

WRIGHT

Well, as you know, I'm also a professor. I've written books of verse, but I'm a professor. And to me personally, teaching is the art that gives me the more pleasure. I'm not trying to put myself down as poet, but I mean what I say. That is, the contact with my students, and my reading of books and trying to share my thoughts and feelings with my students, gives me more pleasure, and I honor this as a high art. Remember that the teachers include Jesus, Socrates, Siddhartha, Meister Eckhardt. In short, yes.

INTERVIEWER

Poetry is something that you can't escape from yourself?

**Translated from the Gaelic by Dr. Douglas Hyde.*

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WRIGHT

I'm afraid I have to admit that I cannot escape it, and to that extent I regard it as a kind of curse. I've thought that many a time. Why the hell couldn't I have been a carpenter or a handyman?

INTERVIEWER

Is there behind the feeling that to be a poet is to be too conscious of too many things?

WRIGHT

Well, no, it doesn't mean that to me so much. I'm conscious of many things, only strange things happen, strange things happen to me. And although I say that my ideal would be Horatian, I suspect this happened to beautiful Horace too. Sometimes there is a force of life like the spring which mysteriously takes shape without your even having asked it to take shape, and this is frightening, it is terribly frightening. It has happened maybe a few times to me—times when I've been able to get the poem finished in almost nothing flat.

INTERVIEWER

What poems are they? Do you remember which ones finished themselves in nothing flat?

WRIGHT

A poem called "Father," a poem called "A Blessing." Where did they come from? If you were to ask me that question, I would have to say, how should I know? Being a poet sometimes puts you at the mercy of life, and life is not always merciful.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever taught creative writing?

WRIGHT

I tried it once and failed at it completely because all I could

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do was sit and talk to the class. And someone would ask me a question, how I worked on something, and all I could do was grunt. This is not to say it can't be done, it can be done very brilliantly, as we know from the work of Theodore Roethke, who was a very great teacher.

INTERVIEWER

Was he your teacher?

WRIGHT

Yes, and he was my good friend for four years.

Oh father dear,
Do ships at sea
Have legs way down below?

Of course they do,
You goosey you,
Or else how could they go?

Roethke used to toss up a lot of them like that.

INTERVIEWER

What did he teach you?

WRIGHT

He taught mainly the craft, and he, like Berryman and like Lowell, was an entirely conscious craftsman. He understood that the relation between the craft and the mysterious imagination is not what we conventionally think it to be. There are some people who think that a very careful, conscious craftsmanship will repress your feelings. And Roethke understood that it is careful, conscious craft which liberates your feelings and liberates your imagination.

INTERVIEWER

I know you took a Master's in creative writing. I'm not aware

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of how many poets actually study creative writing in a formal situation. Is there any real value in that, or does one still have to learn the essential things by himself?

WRIGHT

I took the Master's in creative writing to get it the hell out of the way. Don't you have to learn every essential thing by yourself? Stanley Kunitz said to me once: "You've got to get down into the pit of the self, the real pit, and then you have to find your own way to climb up out of it. And it can't be anybody else's way. It has to be yours."

May I tell you why I took the M.A. by writing a book of verse? I wanted to be a serious teacher and I wanted to get the M.A. out of the way so I could get down to the serious work of the doctorate, which I did. And I wrote it on Dickens. My subject as a teacher, my main subject, is the history of the English novel.

INTERVIEWER

For a poet?

WRIGHT

Oh, there is a plenty of poetry in it. "And it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush my only into your arms." *Finnegans Wake*. Do you want to hear another one? This is from *Tristram Shandy*. Tristram, the narrator, has been trying to get to the place where he is born. At the end of Chapter Eight of Volume IX he thinks he can finally tell what happened the night he was conceived, but then he suddenly remembers from what his Uncle Toby told him, that the night he was conceived his father, Walter Shandy, and his mother got into a quarrel. It had something to do with who was to put the cat out and who was to wind the clock or something like that. And suddenly Laurence Sterne

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breaks through his own narrator, in the middle of the argument, and he says this. This is prose in a novel: "I will not argue the matter: Time wastes too fast: every letter I trace tells me with what rapidity Life follows my pen; the days and hours of it, more precious, my dear Jenny! than the rubies about thy neck, are flying over our heads like light clouds of a windy day never to return more—every thing presses on—whilst thou are twisting that lock—see, it goes grey; and every time I kiss thy hand to bid adieu, and every absence which follows it, are preludes to that eternal separation which we are shortly to make—Heaven have mercy upon us both!" And the whole of Chapter Nine is: "Now for what the world thinks of that ejaculation, I would not give a groat." And then a little later in the novel he interrupts himself again and says: "You wonder who Jenny is, don't you? Well, you pay attention to your own business and get back to the story."

INTERVIEWER

I want to ask what poets influenced your early work and what did you learn from them?

WRIGHT

All suddenly the wind comes soft,
And Spring is here again;
And the hawthorn quickens with buds of green,
And my heart with buds of pain.

My heart all Winter lay so numb,
The earth so dead and frore,
That I never thought the Spring would come,
Or my heart wake any more.

But Winter's broken and earth has woken
And the small birds cry again;
And the hawthorn hedge puts forth its buds,
And my heart puts forth its pain.

Can you guess who wrote that?

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INTERVIEWER

Robinson?

WRIGHT

You would never guess, would you? Rupert Brooke. And he was a very good writer for a sixteen-year-old to read. "Down the blue night the unending columns press . . ." People never give him a tumble any more, but he was pretty good. He's dead.

INTERVIEWER

In the note attached to *The Green Wall*, you mentioned Robinson and Frost as influences.

WRIGHT

Well, I was somewhat older then. When I wrote that book I was twenty-seven years old. I could tell you the kind of thing I had in mind. I wrote a sonnet called "Saint Judas," and in that sonnet I was trying to do two things technically: to write a sonnet that would be a genuine petrarchan sonnet, and at the same time be a dramatic monologue. I got that idea from Robinson, who has a sonnet called "How Annandale Went Out." Do you know what "went out" means? Well, this is conventional hospital parlance for dying. So and so went out last night. Annandale is a character Robinson had written about before, but in this particular sonnet the doctor is speaking. And, as usual in a dramatic monologue, he is speaking to another person, so that what you are doing is overhearing a conversation in which one person speaks and the other is listening. The doctor was a friend of George Annandale's. George Annandale was an alcoholic who was suffering terribly with his death and so the doctor gave him an injection. That's what the word engine means in this poem. He gave him an injection which killed him; that is, he administered euthanasia. Then he gets drunk, and in the poem he is talking to another friend of George Annandale's. What is he trying to do? And Robinson—great Robinson!—leaves you hanging

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there saying, yes, what was he trying to do? Here is the sonnet: *

"They called it Annandale—and I was there
To flourish, to find words, and to attend:
Liar, physician, hypocrite, and friend,
I watched him; and the sight was not so fair
As one or two that I have seen elsewhere:
An apparatus not for me to mend—
A wreck, with hell between him and the end,
Remained of Annandale; and I was there.

"I know the ruin as I knew the man;
So put the two together, if you can,
Remembering the worst you know of me.
Now view yourself as I was, on the spot—
With a slight kind of engine. Do you see?
Like this . . . You wouldn't hang me? I thought not."

Then we have my poem on Judas, who is, I suppose, the ultimate lost betrayer. It is a—well, I wouldn't call it a literal imitation of Robinson, but if I hadn't read Robinson's sonnets I know that I wouldn't have tried to write that poem.

INTERVIEWER

What did you learn from Frost?

WRIGHT

Well, first of all I think that there is his profound, terrifying, and very tragic view of the universe, which seems to me true. I've never said life is meaningless, I've said it is tragic. I think it is intensely precious. God, sometimes I think I'm so happy I don't know what to do with me. But it hurts like hell. There is that, but also technically there is something in Frost. He knows how to keep the adjectives out. An example is his poem "Lodged." A very short poem, it has one adverb in it—"actually"—and that one adverb, it seems to me, strikes like a bullet.

* *"How Annandale Went Out" (copyright 1910 Charles Scribner's Sons) is reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons from THE TOWN DOWN THE RIVER by Edwin Arlington Robinson.*

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INTERVIEWER

Frost—America's great nature poet. Would you call yourself a nature poet?

WRIGHT

In part, yes.

INTERVIEWER

The reason I ask that question is, the early poems seem partly nature poems, but also there are a lot of poems about people. *The Branch Will Not Break* is almost entirely a nature book. *Shall We Gather at the River* is something else, more personal. And the new poems, probably growing out of your life here in New York, are almost urban poems. I mean there is an urban landscape as opposed to the earlier Minnesota and Ohio landscapes.

WRIGHT

Human beings are unhappily part of nature, perhaps nature become conscious of itself. Oh, how I would love to be a chickadee! But I can't be a chickadee, all I can be is what I am. I love the natural world and I'm conscious of the pain in it. So I'm a nature poet who writes about human beings in nature. I love Nietzsche, who called man 'the sick animal'.

INTERVIEWER

Is it fair to ask you which of your own books is your favorite, which one you like best?

WRIGHT

Yes, that's fair enough. My own favorite is *Saint Judas*. I tried to come to terms in that book with what I felt to be the truth of my own life, which is that of a man who wants very much to be happy, but who is not happy. I do not have the talent for happiness. There are some people who do. I have a friend, a student, and you heard me tell her yesterday on the telephone that one of the high rise buildings in New York is a

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cat house. And she roared and roared with laughter and said it will set her up for the whole day. I do not have that gift; I wish I had. And in *Saint Judas* I tried to face the fact that I am not a happy man by talent. Sometimes I have been very happy, but characteristically I'm a miserable son of a bitch. I tried to come to terms with that in the clearest and most ferociously perfect form that I could find and in all the traditional ways. That was partly a defensive action, because I hurt so much then. After I finished that book I had finished with poetry forever. I truly believed that I had said what I had to say as clearly and directly as I could, and that I had no more to do with this art.

INTERVIEWER

You've told me that before. What was wrong, and how did you get going again?

WRIGHT

At that time I had come, for personal reasons but also for artistic reasons, to something like a dead end. I was in despair at that time, and what usually has consoled me is words—I've always been able to turn to them. But suddenly, it seemed to me that the words themselves had gone dead, I mean dead in me, and I didn't know what to do. It was at that time that Robert Bly's magazine, which was then called *The Fifties*, appeared. I wrote him a long letter because his magazine contained a translation of a poem by Georg Trakl. Some years earlier, at the University of Vienna, I had read in German the poetry of Trakl and I didn't know what to do with it, though I recognized that somehow it had a depth of life in it that I needed. Trakl is a poet who writes in parallelisms, only he leaves out the intermediary, rationalistic explanations of the relation between one image and another. I would suppose that Trakl has had as much influence on me as anybody else has had. But the interesting thing is that when I read Robert Bly's magazine, I wrote him a letter. It was sixteen pages long and single spaced, and all he said in reply was, "Come on out to the farm." I made my way out to that farm, and almost as soon

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as we met each other we started to work on our translation of Trakl.

You should see us working together on something. We get up in the morning and won't even look at each other. We pace back and forth. He'll turn without looking at me and say to his wife, Carol, "Yeah, he likes J.V. Cunningham." Then I get one up on him by quoting him a Cunningham poem. And we sit and stare at each other. We would say things that I would not repeat even for *The Paris Review*. And yet I'm a member of his family too. I'm Mary's godfather. They loved me and they saved my life. I don't mean just the life of my poetry, either. To think of Carol Bly is to defeat despair. Never mind my small experience of human beings. Carol is one of the noblest persons who ever lived, as far as I'm concerned.

INTERVIEWER

Did he have the strong influence on your work of that time that is sometimes ascribed to him?

WRIGHT

Yes. He made it clear to me that the tradition of poetry which I had tried to master, and in which I'd come to a dead end, was not the only one. He reminded me that poetry is a possibility, that, although all poetry is formal, there are many forms, just as there are many forms of feeling.

INTERVIEWER

The book that followed, of course, is *The Branch Will Not Break*. How do these things show up there?

WRIGHT

At the center of that book is my rediscovery of the abounding delight of the body that I had forgotten about. Every Friday afternoon I used to go out to Bly's farm, and there were so many animals out there. There was Simon, who was an Airedale, but about the size of a Great Dane. There was David, the horse, my beautiful, beloved David, the sway-

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backed Palomino. Simon and David used to go out by Bly's barn. David would stand there looking out over the corn fields that lead onto the prairies of South Dakota, and Simon would sit down beside him, and they would stay there for hours. And sometimes, after I sat on the front porch and watched them, sometimes I went and sat down beside Simon. Neither Simon nor David looked at me, and I felt blessed. They allowed me to join them. They liked me. I can't get over it—they liked me. Simon didn't bite me, David didn't kick me; they just stayed there as they were. And I sat down on my fat ass and looked over the corn fields and the prairie with them. And there we were. One afternoon, a gopher came up out of a hole and looked at us. Simon didn't leap for him, David didn't kick him, and I didn't shoot him. There we were, all four of us together. All I was thinking was, I can be happy sometimes. And I'd forgotten that. And with those animals I remembered then. And that is what that book is about, the rediscovery. I didn't hate my body at all. I liked myself very much. Simon is lost. David, with what Robert called his beautiful and sensitive face, has gone to the knacker's. I wish I knew how to tell you. My son Marsh, the musician, is in love with animals.

INTERVIEWER

What effect do you feel your role as translator—the sort of work you did with Bly—has had on your own poetry?

WRIGHT

It's led me into some further possibilities of saying something that I think I wanted to say from the beginning. And that, unfortunately, being damned as I consider myself, I felt that I had to say or I would die. I think that most of the people who are alive in the world right now are very unhappy. I don't want people to be unhappy, and I'm sorry that they are. I wish there were something I could do to help. I'm coming to face the fact that there isn't much I can do to help. And I think I've been trying to say that ever since I've started to write books. That's what my books are about.

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INTERVIEWER

How do you react to hearing the poems of *The Branch Will Not Break* and afterward described as surrealistic?

WRIGHT

They are not surrealistic, they are Horatian and classical. When they sound surrealistic, all that means is that my attempt to be clear has failed. They are not surrealistic and I am not a surrealist. The crucial element of surrealism is not a structural and formal matter, but that it is funny. Up to World War I, the ideals in Europe had been ideals of honor, integrity, Mother, apple pie, and the flag. The young men who went into that war suddenly discovered that this was a lie. What it meant was that they were being led to kill each other. The French surrealists responded with comedy, and the only American surrealist we've had who has understood this—no, we've had two of them. One is Malcolm Cowley in the book *Exile's Return*. No, we've had three of them—E.E. Cummings was another one who understood. You know, he went out to urinate on the Paris lawn. Suddenly, a policeman grabbed him and he immediately found himself surrounded by the French. This was after the war was over, and they shouted at the cop, *"Reprieve le pisseur Americain!"* Let that American pisser go.

Another thing that happened was that Cowley was sitting, as he tells us in that beautiful book, in a cafe. The waiter pushed him. He pushed the waiter back, and he thought, this is it. You know, *le gendarmerie* will be here in a minute. And so he covered his face with his hands. Suddenly, he found himself lifted on the shoulders of all the people in the cafe, and they carried him down the street singing. The only other American poet that we have had who has understood the principle of French surrealism is our beautiful poet from Ohio—where else?—Kenneth Patchen.

INTERVIEWER

My favorite of your books is *Shall We Gather at the River*. And one thing that I really like about it is the fact that it has

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integrity and coherence. In other words, it's not quite a single narrative poem, but it's not just a collection of separate lyrics either. How do you feel about that in respect to that book?

WRIGHT

It was very carefully written to move in that way. Whether it came off or not is another question, and not for me to judge. Like hell! I know damn well that that book is perfectly constructed, and I knew exactly what I was doing from the very first syllable to the very last one.

INTERVIEWER

Which is what? What were you doing?

WRIGHT

I was trying to move from death to resurrection and death again, and challenge death finally. Well, if I must tell you, I was trying to write about a girl I was in love with who has been dead for a long time. I tried to sing with her in that book. Not to recreate her; you can't recreate anybody, at least I can't. But I thought maybe I could come to terms with that feeling which has hung on in my heart for so long. The book has been damned because it is so carefully dreamed.

INTERVIEWER

Do you in constructing your books generally have that idea of coherence in mind?

WRIGHT

Every time. Did I mention to you Robert Frost's remark—it is a very Horatian remark—that if you have a book of twenty-four poems, the book itself should be the twenty-fifth? And I have tried that every time, every time.

INTERVIEWER

Well, let's take one more example. What was your principle of order in *The Green Wall*? What structural principle were you working with?

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WRIGHT

I tried to begin with the fall of man, and ackowledge that the fall of man was a good thing, the *felix culpa*, the happy guilt. And then I tried to weave my way in and out through nature poems and people suffering in nature because they were conscious. That was the idea. I don't think that that book is structurally very coherent, but that was the idea of it. You know, I left out about forty poems from that book.

INTERVIEWER

Did you?

WRIGHT

I had a letter from Mr. Auden about it in which he said, in effect, "I think that you should cut some things, but whatever you cut is up to you." And once I started cutting I got about forty of them out, and ended up with forty. In other words, I write abundantly. And then my next step is to struggle to reduce the ornament, to reduce the abundance—to prune the book, in other words, the way one prunes a tree—so it can grow. This is my idea of a book.

INTERVIEWER

Do you do that with individual poems also—rewrite them and prune them?

WRIGHT

Yes. I rewrite my poems so often that I sometimes get mixed up about which version was finally published. I don't want to let a poem go until I think I've got it honed down just to what it should be, and that involves all sorts of weird problems. One of them is that you over-write it. You've got to know when to stop. Bach is the greatest of the human composers, but in my opinion Mozart is an angel. And one thing that makes him angelic is that he knows exactly when to stop. He knows when to shut up. And in doing that he gives you your own song. I think he is the greatest thing who ever . . . He is the spring.

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I think he's an angel, I think he was an angel that came to the earth. And that is one thing that makes him angelic—he knows exactly when to shut up. And by knowing that, you sit there, and you realize that your own song is coming awake in music. He can give you your own song. Think of that! God I think that is miraculous, I think that literally is miraculous.

INTERVIEWER

You have said that being a very good craftsman is a problem for you as a poet. How is this so?

WRIGHT

Because my chief enemy in poetry is glibness. My family background is partly Irish, and this means many things, but linguistically it means that it is too easy to talk sometimes. I keep thinking of Horace's idea which Byron so very accurately expressed in a letter to Murray, "Easy writing is damned hard reading." I suffer from glibness. I speak and write too easily. Stanley Kunitz has been a master of mine, and he tells me that he suffers from the same problem. His books are very short, as mine are, and he has struggled and struggled to strip them down. There are poets, I have no doubt, who achieve by some kind of natural gift the difficulty that one needs. Because whatever else poetry is, it is a struggle, and the enemy, the deadly enemy of poetry is glibness. And that is why I have struggled to strip my poems down.

INTERVIEWER

When you sit down to write a poem, what happens? Do you start with an idea, a theme, a rhythm?

WRIGHT

In my own case it's usually with a rhythm and not with an idea. And I don't know what I'm going to say, and three-fourths of the time after I've finished I don't even know what I've said. I wouldn't say that I'm a frustrated musician, but I love music and I think this is why I usually begin a poem that

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way. Music has given me a much greater sense of the possibilities of quantity in poetry.

INTERVIEWER

But can you do that? Is it really possible to take a musical quality and make it work only in words?

WRIGHT

The Elizabethans sure as hell did it. When they figured out blank verse somehow they learned this was a way you could sing and talk at the same time. And they didn't let it dominate them. Hell, there are about ten thousand examples—Shakespeare poured songs into his plays, Ben Jonson wrote many beautiful songs, Sir John Dowland, one of the great musicians of the world, was at the top of his form right at that moment, Sir John Harrington, Sir John Davies and his "Nosce Teipsum," George Peele. They were all in there.

Walt Whitman learned how to do it. He didn't understand what he was doing, but he did it. Let me give you just one example, from his poem "I Heard You Solemn-Sweet Pipes of the Organ." He has this line, and you don't have to ham it up to hear the effect: "Winds of autumn, as I walked the woods at dusk I heard your long-stretch'd sighs up above so mournful."

INTERVIEWER

We were speaking of coherence in books of poems. Did you have in mind, when arranging your *Collected Poems*, an overall unity? One critic has found a quest throughout all your earlier books which he feels is resolved in the section of "New Poems."

WRIGHT

Wait till you see my new book. I published the *Collected Poems* because I had a new book going and those other books were getting in my way. I thought that this would be the most practical way of getting them off my neck. Once I've finished

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something, I've got to be free of it. I also published that book because it was time to get the hell out of America.

INTERVIEWER

The new book is called *Two Citizens*. What is the significance of the title?

WRIGHT

My wife, Annie, who means so much to me, introduced me to Europe, which we love. And yet we know that we also love America. We know that at this time Americans, who are good people and a kind of lost people, are suffering very badly. There is so much vitality in this country, there are so many good men, good, kind, intelligent men. Where did it all go wrong? May I quote Mencken? "There are many people in this country, some of whom are handsome, and many of whom are wise, and Calvin Coolidge is President of the United States. It is as though a man, seated before a sumptuous banquet, were to turn aside and regale himself by eating flies."

So Annie, who had taught several years ago in the Overseas School of Rome and in the American school in Paris, introduced me to France and Italy. I'm a Viennese myself, that is I'm fluent in German. Annie speaks a little French and Italian. We are two citizens. Citizens of the poor old son of a bitch, the United States. But we are also citizens of Europe.

Two Citizens begins with a curse on America. There are some savage poems about Ohio, my home, in that book, poems that I could not have written if I hadn't found Annie. She gave me the strength to come to terms with things which I loved and hated at the same time. And in the middle of that book, between the curse and the final expression of grief, there is a whole long sequence of love poems. I've never written any book I've detested so much. No matter what anybody thinks about it, I know this book is final. God damn me if I ever write another.

Even though I don't love that book, I love what lies behind it, because it grew so directly out of my new life, my life with

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Annie. We'd planned a trip to Europe, but it was late spring and I was trying to finish up the *Collected Poems*. I felt empty, but Annie kept me going. She even did all the typing. So we finished the book, the contract was signed, the manuscript delivered, and off we went. And for the second time in my life I thought I was done with poetry forever. I always think I am done with poetry forever. We stayed several days in Paris, where we would walk out in the morning. We would go to market, then we would go to a cathedral to see what was going on in town. Then we would go with our cheese, our paté, our wine, and have lunch. Then we went to bed. Then in the late afternoon we would go out and have an aperitif. And to my utter, miraculous astonishment, I started to write poems again. And they turned out to be love poems, love poems of gratitude. And that went on all summer, all the way drifting down through from Paris to the south of France, and then to Italy.

I told you earlier that I loved *Saint Judas* the best because I came to terms with my own pain then. But the new book is—it's almost a resurrection of *Saint Judas*. In fact, maybe I should have given it one of the titles Don Hall has suggested to me. He's a wonderful man, and he loves to make up titles. One he suggested to me was *Son of Saint Judas*. Another was *Saint Judas Meets the Wolf Man*. He's a fine man, an excellent poet and certainly one of our most intelligent critics of poetry. And we have damned few, damned few. That's one thing that's wrong with us, because you can't have a real poetry without a real criticism.

INTERVIEWER

Does your poem "*Ars Poetica*: Some Recent Criticism" deal with literary criticism?

WRIGHT

No, this is a poem about my Aunt Agnes, who is a very suffering woman, and has been dying slowly for many years. I get so damned angry about the difference between literary

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criticism and real life in this country that I thought I would write an *ars poetica* of my own, which is about what is really going on in this country.

INTERVIEWER

What would you see as the ideal criticism?

WRIGHT

To teach the younger poets the crucial importance of the relation between craft and imagination. Because without craft, by which I mean the active employment of the intelligence, the imagination, that mysterious and frightening thing, can not come free. We have had to learn so much by ourselves, and you, the younger poets, are in a position to see what Merwin and Dickey and Bly and Kinell and Stafford and Mary Oliver, with her singular purity and gentleness, and I meant, that the American possibility is a possibility of forms fantastically beyond what we had been taught.

INTERVIEWER

While we've been talking you have mentioned several very good but almost forgotten poets—Edward Thomas, Rupert Brooke, and others. Of course you've also written a poem indirectly addressed to Edna St. Vincent Millay. Why do we keep forgetting good poets like that?

WRIGHT

I have no answer to that. How do you account for the fact that people forgot John Donne for a couple of hundred years? We can't remember everything at once. We do get a few people who understand the intensity and the true beauty of life in the face of death and pain. And what else have we got except love? We've got to have it because the only other thing there is is death and pain. That I take it is the meaning of that shocking statement, God is love. Whole cultures have been built to get around that one. Now that we are almost finished, I want to tell you two stories. The first is one of the tales of the

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Hasidim, from Western Poland.

There was an orthodox Jewish tailor who knew that on the day of atonement he ought to attend the services at the synagogue. He did not go. The next day he met his Rabbi. The Rabbi said, "All right, let's have the excuse."

The tailor said, "I decided, Master, that yesterday I would go in the back of my shop and talk to God myself."

"All right," said the Rabbi, "what did you say to him?"

"Well, I said, 'God, you know everything, and you know all my sins. But for your convenience I will repeat them. Once when I was young I slapped a child in the face. Once when I was a tailor I made a pair of pants for a man and instead of giving him back what was left of the material, I kept it myself. I've probably committed a few more and I can't remember them, but God you know everything and you remember them. And as far as I know, that is the extent of my sinning'."

"Go on," said the Rabbi.

"Then I said, 'God, you have allowed children to be born without eyes. You have allowed the human race, whom you created, out of their own unhappiness to kill each other when they did not even know each other. You are all-powerful, you know everything'."

So the Rabbi said, "Go on."

The tailor said, "I told him, 'God, let us compare our sins. If you'll forgive me mine, I will forgive you yours'."

The Rabbi paused, and then shouted, "You idiot! Why did you let him off that easily? Yesterday was the day of atonement. You could have forced him to send the messiah!"

INTERVIEWER

That's a fantastic story.

WRIGHT

Yes. Our real life is the most fantastic story. Rabbi Heschel is dead. *Eheu*! Back in Minneapolis I made friends who are Moslems and they invited me to the first banquet after the feast of Ramadan. Ramadan is a ritual carried on in the spring

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in which the Moslems remind themselves that there are many poor and suffering on the earth, and from dawn until evening they will not eat or drink. But the Moslems also have their orthodox, their establishment.

In the eighth century, there was a man named Mansar al Halaj who entered the city of Baghdad. He was a Sufi. The Sufi were a Moslem sect who had heard about Jesus, and they believed that Jesus was a saint. There are many of them, but al Halaj is my favorite. This is what he did. He went to the chief authorities of the city of Baghdad and he said, "I am going to try to live as Jesus lived. I know what happened"—eighth century, remember—"I remember what happened to him, and I know that if I try to live as he lived, you will be frightened, and I know what you will do to me. And I want to tell you beforehand that I don't hate you."

Well, they gave him the fish eye and said, "Well, here's another nut."

Then he went out and talked to people saying, "Why don't we try to love one another?"

Finally they got him. They crucified him. They cut off his right hand and his left foot and crucified him upside down. And at dawn he was still alive. The Vizier—ah, Henry Kissinger—came out and said to him, "Were you flying through the universe again last night?"

And as he died he said, "No, I was just hanging here, alone with the alone, among the stars."

I've got one more for you. It's a gag, a Moslem gag. You'll like it, it's very nice. One of my best friends in the world is a man named Ghazi Ghalani. He is from Iraq, from Baghdad, and I used to see him in St. Paul all the time. There used to be a bar, a piano bar, called The House of Ming. And I would get this phone call saying, "Hello, Jim?"

"Ghazi! Where are you?"

"I am at The House of Ming. Come on down and have a drink."

So I would arrive, and there would be this ninety-year-old woman playing World War I torch songs. And Ghazi would be

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sitting there. He looked like Danny Thomas. And I would say, "How do you feel, Ghazi?" Now in English if you ask somebody how he feels, and he feels lousy, he'll say, "I feel lousy."

But Ghazi used to do the prayer gesture, and then he would say in Arabic, "If my family traded in shrouds, people would stop dying."

If my boyhood dreams were true, my country would stop dying.

—PETER STITT

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A Portfolio of Poems by James Wright

TO HORACE

Everything I love is young: I love you, because you are young. Satire, Epistle, the glistening inner wing of a redwing blackbird's wing, you too are young.

I am dying young. Horace, young lover of old words, young new faces, I love you best.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Jane Lee told me that in Maine she met a little boy who insisted that in his family they had green blood in their veins.

When his mother heard about what he'd said, she spanked him.

But I believe him.

THE DIVINE MARIO

Mario Procaccino is the nightingale of Manhattan, the delight of my heart.

Mario for mayor of me, and my glorious city.

The Mayor of New York should be a nightingale.

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BREAKFAST

I have this weird habit of opening a hard-boiled egg by cracking its shell on the top of my head. This afternoon, combing my hair before swimming, I discovered a fragment of egg shell stuck to my skull.

My wife understands that the habit is mysterious, even mildly insane. But she just smiles in a lovely resignation to the annoyances of love.

I know, but—

What a dreadful headache Jove must have had.

And William Dunbar, who tried to cure his headache by writing a poem about it in Middle Scots, in Scotland, long, long ago.

I love the egg.

I even love my poor, thick, mysterious skull.

Have a little mercy on me this morning of all mornings.

We are all very strange.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO PEOPLE WHO SOMETIMES GET ANGRY WITH ME

You know, you make me very curious about myself.

One of these days, if I can get up the nerve, I think I'll cut off a piece of my own head and eat it.

Then I'll know what it tastes like when you snap it off.

Then maybe I'll know as much about myself as you do.

I hope I'm strawberry. I like strawberry.

But even vanilla will do.

Or tutti-frutti?

Banana?

Mint?

Oh, the hell with it.

Make mine chocolate.

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COLD SUMMER SUN, BE WITH ME SOON

I wanted to write something that you could understand, as Dr. Williams said.

So naturally the God damned kitchen light bulb burned out just as it got dark outside.

Here I am, sitting at day break, which is of course gray.

It is raining.

You haven't come out yet.

And neither have I.

Where does that leave me?

Where does that leave you?

Where are the God damned new light bulbs in this strange house?

Oh, come on out, for God's sake.

I can't write a damned thing, which was all I wanted to do.

And all I wanted to do was write something that you could understand.

Just as Dr. Williams said.

For his own good.

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THE LAST DAY IN PARIS

I think it was the second time I had been in Paris. That means it was the second time I had been in Paris with you.

The last day in Paris is the end of the world.

It was the last day I had spent with you during our second time in Paris.

In the evening we were going to gather our belongings together and take the train to Rome.

I was in love with Rome, and terribly frightened of the city, because I had heard the rumors of history.

Any traveler toward Rome who has learned his Latin along the Ohio River knows loneliness and fear and the apprehension of disaster,

Because it is his own city, his own secret dream of a place on the horizon, which is a horizon because it is not there, and is bone bare broken, Pagan and Christian alike, and is lonely in its brutality,

Lonely and upsetting, because Rome is beautiful.

You knew Rome.
I knew nothing but my own frightened dream,
My dream of Rome.

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We had to leave Paris in the evening.
We were not reasonable, it did no good to know
Paris would still be there after
We got back and died.

The loneliness I felt for you and the loneliness
You felt for me
Was hideous, it was the true hell of love.
We had to leave Paris in the evening,
I don't have to explain to you what I mean
When I say that leaving the beloved,
A place like you,
Makes me sick.

We got sick together.
Is that a definition of love?

We had to leave the beloved,
And we both knew it.

After a nice lunch along Saint Germaine des Pres,
We walked together
Alone.

You with your long legs so willowy,
The original of leaves
Nobody has yet named.
Wandered a thousand miles along the Seine.

You were off, and lonely,
For all your love of Rome.
And I was only two steps behind you,
And even along the Seine I could not find you,
So I had no home.

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We have about six hours left, I said.
What do you want?

I want to see some art.

* * *

M. Matisse, I offer you this brief poem
Out of love for you,
And I offer it for the sake
Of the sanity of places I have wandered in,
And I offer it for the sake of whatever
Beauty and heartbreak I can imagine.

* * *

Oh, he was dead, was he?
You strode along the river,
A grim darkness on your blond
And lovely face.

We had to leave Paris,
Which is hell to leave.
We had nothing but each other
In the mean time.

And I was able to say
Look, look, I found a place
Where we can see Matisse from young to old
And back again.
The old man gave us love and understanding,
The old man gave a shape to loneliness.

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HERACLITUS

My beautiful America, vast in its brutality, and brutal in its vastness. All the way from Paris to Vienna takes less time to find than all the way from New York to Pittsburgh, where Duquesne University had a beautiful football team when I was a boy.

One evening beside the river, only its name. Only one river, the Ohio, that is the loneliest river in the world.

Patsy di Franco sank down into the time of the river and stayed. Joe Bumbico jumped naked into the suck hole and dragged up Harry Schultz. I started to cry.

A cop gouged his fists into Harry's kidneys. He must have thought they were lungs.

Harry couldn't talk plain.
Harry puked.
I loved Harry, he was one of my best friends.
Harry, Harry.
Are you still alive?
Who? Me? I ain't not.

I swam all the way across the Ohio River with my friends alone. Me and Junior and Elwood and Shamba and Crumb. We made it all the way across to West Virginia.

I was only a boy.

I swam all the way through a tear on a dead face.

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America is dead.
And it is the only country I had.

Harry. Harry.
Are you still alive?

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TO CAROLEE COOMBS-STACY, WHO SET MY VERSES TO MUSIC

One afternoon a few years ago, in a mountain forest in upstate New York, I strayed from the beaten path and made my way slowly and alone through the brush. The little shrubs and bushes and saplings were not particularly dense, and I suppose I could have broken into a run if I had cared to. But there is something about a slow solitary walk that gives me the feeling of having become a moving root. If I could only make myself stand still long enough, I would turn into a tree. I wonder what kind of leaf I would bear.

Ordinarily a city-dweller, as I have become, hears nothing at all when he first arrives in some comparatively unspoiled natural place. I guess the drumming of urban sounds has made his ears temporarily insensitive. But after about fifteen minutes, one begins to be aware of the sounds of the forest. The birds, the insects, the breezes, the occasional movements of invisible animals (not always invisible—I saw a porcupine there once, rooting among dead leaves—he glanced at me over his shoulder of calm patience and, for all I know, welcome—he was very fine) foraging or perhaps just turning over in their afternoon sleep—these made a rich music of their own.

But on my afternoon, I walked slowly, and paused, and stood still, and walked on slowly, further and further into the places of the trees, and paused, and walked slowly, and paused, and listened. And even after quite a long time, I heard nothing at all. I even resorted to an old device, honored by dead men who lie down among trees. I stood absolutely still, and closed my eyes, and listened and listened. And still I heard nothing.

When I opened my eyes, a doe was standing only a few feet away from me. She was dappled with fragments broken off

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from a birch tree. She stood utterly still. So did I. I didn't want to startle her, of course, but it was strange to realize that she didn't want to startle me either. Always when I walk in woods I become aware of being observed—never with hostility. I even enjoy the presences and the observations of snakes. Extraordinarily beautiful, they are charming. The reserved and dignified serpents have received a bad press from western mythologies and religions. No, never with hostility: but with interest and even with concern.

The doe and I stood and looked at each other. Usually a doe, when she appears, will fix you with her eyes. But this particular doe, ravishing as she was in her little dappling clear clouds of sunlight and golden brown fur, gazed not only into my eyes but over my whole body. And still she did not move.

And neither did I.

We stood for a long strange time. I was aware that we were communing without fear. We stood so long, that it occurred to me to listen yet again for sounds from the rest of the forest. And still I heard nothing.

And then I heard something. It was not a sound made by any animal or flower or wind known to me. It was music, and yet it seemed to pass almost beyond sound itself. It was movement. It was full of silences. I closed my eyes to cherish it all the more. The doe stood there, close as ever. I kept my eyes closed. I listened and listened and listened.

When I opened my eyes, I saw something that I would not have believed if it had been told me by somebody else. The doe stood there, her posture unchanged—and she had closed her eyes.

As I realized what was happening, a quiver went over and through my entire body.

All this while I had assumed that the doe and I were standing face to face, each waiting for the other to make a sound. But now I knew that, whatever it was I heard, the doe was listening to it, too.

After another short time, the music passed away into its own secret silences. The doe and I looked at each other with

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what came close to being a spoken farewell and blessing. Then each of us slowly, without a hint of panic or distrust, turned in the forest and slowly walked our separate ways. She may have stopped for a moment and looked back at me, as the creatures sometimes do. I do not know what she did. I simply walked away in a different direction. I had thought we were listening for each other. But I believed then, and I believe now, that somehow the doe and I were listening to the same thing, that it was something no other creature could have heard.

I still wonder what it sounded like to the doe.

You were far away, Carolee, on your own mountain-side near Sante Fe, your delicate white hands wakening the dark wood and ivory of your piano, the strange heavy instrument heavy and deep with life as a moving root; and your full throat utterly alive, molding and molding my dumb language till the words became leaves.

And you and the doe and I, three listeners to your music, none of us entirely sure if any other creature had heard.

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DAWN PRAYER IN COLD DARKNESS TO MY SECRET GHOST

(*Translated from an anonymous Latin author*)

God, how I miss you in this empty bed,
My fire banked down and I myself half dead
With loneliness for you alone my love
Who listened to me when my heart cried cold
And frightened so that I could hardly move
And you still thought me very, very old
When all I was was half alive and cowed.
Don't leave me yet beloved oh not yet.
Stay long enough to hear, and not forget.
Now I may never live to see your face
And feel the hands I feel in every place.
Beautiful hands, how will I ever call
You my beloved if all darkness fall
And you not here with me oh lovely hair?
And where will I be then? Nowhere, nowhere.
God how I miss you, burning in this bed,
Arms, lips, good hands to raise me up new-made.

Now my rhythms are changing, and all I can think to do is add the playful Horace to my dawn prayer.

It isn't daylight, love, it's only dawn.
Be kind. You always are. So just slip down
Your clothes, and seize the moment. I won't bore
Your loving ears with figures any more.
So let tomorrow come. It will, it will.
I promise you, this moment, it can't kill
Love, you forgive me joy and I'll forgive
You joy this moment while we're still alive.
Are we alive? I ask. I listen for
Whatever kind reply you choose to give.
Carpe my diem and forgive the God.
Let me come in while I can do some good.
Slip down your sheets and take whatever form
You choose to take, and keep my body warm.

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I love you because I could tell you all my pain, and instead of getting angry at me as so many others do and have often done, you said you loved me too, and that was all. How I long for you now, invisible hands. It was a long time ago that I used to get drunk on that fire Grappa that I hear they still brew in Bassano under the mountain, even when the old hill was owned by the Oësterreicher, the blonds and the red-heads. I thought all they drank was beer, but I was mistaken. Now all I'm drunk on is you. I suffer in my heart for you all day long, I am happy all night long with longing for you to appear, who haven't appeared yet. So all night long I wish I could lie in your arms to get us warm enough. I wish you could come and turn into me and I into you. Then we could be two ghosts in one at the same brief time. It's not the dawn yet. So here I lie all night long. I wish I lay in your arms only, yours alone with you alone with me, my lovely ghost whose body I have never seen.

And when I cried and cried alone in fear,
You were the only one who dared to hear,
And no one else could listen, only you.
All my life long, beloved, I love you,
My ghost as lonely as it always was,
I would give anything to hear your voice,
See your good face, body that understands.
And I suppose that's why I love your hands.
God save me in my darkness where I go,
Where Jenny walked before me, long ago.
Bewildered as her body was, she was,
And now she's nothing but a leaf of grass,
And here I lie alone afraid to face
My dark nest, longing for your visible
Hands that can waken me and still caress,
Patient, not angry while I lie here lost.
God, how I miss you in my lonely ghost.

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Donald Evans

A Portfolio of Stamps of the World

FROM A CONVERSATION

Donald Evans started collecting stamps when he was about six years old. When he was ten, he became preoccupied with building miniature communities. He grew up on a lake in New Jersey, and spent much of his summer days down on the beach, where he made his sand towns and houses and highway systems and cathedrals. They only lasted a few days, but each time they were destroyed, he built better ones. Indoors, he made little villages on top of the family ping-pong table with Dinky Toys and plastic houses and tiny cardboard boxes that he painted to look like buildings. He built mansions on his bedroom floor. He shared this activity with a best friend whose family was well-travelled and had a fascinating house full of collections of old objects and encyclopedias; his mother played piano and sang in Italian while the youngsters built their mansions upstairs. "My visions about my towns, most of them based on fantasies of Europe and royalty, came from playing around that house and listening to her sing."

He and his friend competed in the sand building their towns—both working fanatically in miniature—even making dictionaries, Bibles and thumb-indexed encyclopedias for their rival characters (Evans' was The Queen, his friend's Uncle Rich Harvest). These two *also* competed to outbuild each other and control more area and make more lavish and inventive palaces for themselves.

Quite soon it occured to Evans that he could make his villages more real by making stamps for them. "It was vicarious travelling for me to a made-up world that I liked better than the one I was in. I'm doing that now too. No catastrophes occur. There are no generals or battles or warplanes on my stamps. The countries are innocent, peaceful, composed. Sometimes I get so concentrated in these worlds I get confused . . . it's hard to get out."

By the time he was fifteen he had made about 1,000 stamps—modeled on the stamps in his collection—from about forty different countries which he kept in a three-volume set of composition books entitled "The World-Wide Stamp Album." But then he gave it up. He was in high school then and from being an introverted kid he began getting involved and interested in people. "I began going steady with a cheerleader and going to football games instead of sitting home and making stamps. I got very hung up on being accepted and being like everybody else." He didn't know what he

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wanted to do, but his vague idea was to become an artist. "I thought you had to be like DeKooning and paint giant abstract expressionist canvasses. That was what people were painting then in the late 50's. So I painted big abstract paintings. I would tell my parents I was going out to paint and I'd go down to the shore of the lake where I had made my sand cities and down there I'd smoke and make drawings and then go back and work on my huge paintings. A large oil named 'Moonrise' won first prize in a local competition and people said I had a lot of talent. The World-Wide Stamp Album lay in the bottom of a dresser drawer."

Evans graduated from high school in 1963 and went to Cornell; he decided to be an architect. After graduation in 1969, he came to New York and worked for Richard Meier. He realizes now that he thought he could go on building his towns in a professional way. But architecture discouraged him—his most obvious reaction is that he has almost never drawn buildings on his stamps. Still, he credits the architectural influence in the involvement he has with solidity and balance—and also how the stamps are arranged on a page, whether in rows or triangles or diamonds or columns. "Architecture is very rich in its disciplines. Those years of drawing tiny little bathroom details on architect's plans maintained a level of visual discipline that I'd always had from making those stamps and the villages and bookcases and the tiny little books."

All this time Evans had saved his childhood stamps. He showed them only to intimate friends because he thought they were too "weird" and that no one would have use for them. One day a friend of his, the graphic designer, Barry Zaid, who worked at the Push-Pin Studios showed them to Milton Glaser, who wanted to publish them in *Audience* magazine, which unfortunately folded before the portfolio could appear.

When he finally quit his job at Richard Meier in 1972, Evans took the stamps with him to Holland—along with a stock of carefully perforated typewriter paper to use as his canvasses: he knew he was going to paint more stamps.

He was living in the village of Schalkwijke on a little road called Achterdijk which in Dutch means "behind the dike." He began painting at a table by the window in the house along the railway. "It was a terrific release after working in New York. My first stamps were designed for a number of different imaginary countries named after Dutch friends, and also after Achterdijk. A dealer in Amsterdam offered to sell them for me—which encouraged me to make more. I began to get involved, and more sophisticated technically."

Since then he has made almost 2500 stamps from about twenty-five countries named for and describing friends and interests all meticulously kept track of in a 250 page volume entitled *Catalogue of The World*, "which is now in its eighth edition. Some of the countries have as many as 200 stamps—certain places are so compelling and with so many possibilities that I just keep going until I get bored."

Evans is necessarily vague about where these places are. "I don't like to make references to real places on my stamps though I use existing languages. The stamps are more a kind of diary or journal. I hesitate to write down my made-up histories because I like to keep them open . . . and that is so I can continue to make more stamps . . ."

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Evans uses a number two Grumbacher brush for his delicate work. He has used the same brush for the last three years, plucking out the hairs until now he feels that to work with a new brush would be like painting with a "Hershey Bar." Often he paints from photographs. "I can't shut my eyes and see, say, a camel, and draw it; I don't have that gift. But the images don't necessarily come out looking like the photos. I have a visual image of the stamp right away, but I have a hard time deciding colors."

All his stamps have an issue date. "My issue date corresponds to the design and coloration of the stamp and establishes them in a point of time. I tend to make old-fashioned looking monochromatic stamps. They were my favorite ones when I was a stamp collector, especially British and French colonial stamps which were so romantic and informative—little palm trees holding up scrolls, things like that. But I avoid using real stamps as models or collecting them because I don't want to be influenced."

Evans uses postmarks both to make the stamps look more real and to obliterate certain mistakes. "I'll cancel over the stamp to deliberately obscure things or just to be perverse, to establish a certain layer of distance from the work."

Friends often ask him, "Would you do stamps for real countries?" "It's tempting," Evans replies, "but I don't feel like sitting down with all those graphic designers or those government committees around a conference table to change things around until by the time you're done you've got a second rate conceptual image.

"To my knowledge there are no artists who make stamps in the way I do. But there very well may be. It's like the question of whether we are the only planet in the universe with people on it. I just don't think we are. I'm curious, but I also dread finding there's someone in . . . *Paraguay* or Switzerland or somewhere who is doing exactly what I do, and doing it better. Throughout my life I've tended to withdraw if there was someone else doing better what I wanted to do. So that sort of competition would kill my interest in making stamps. It really would. I'd have to give up my world of stamps."

— M.M.

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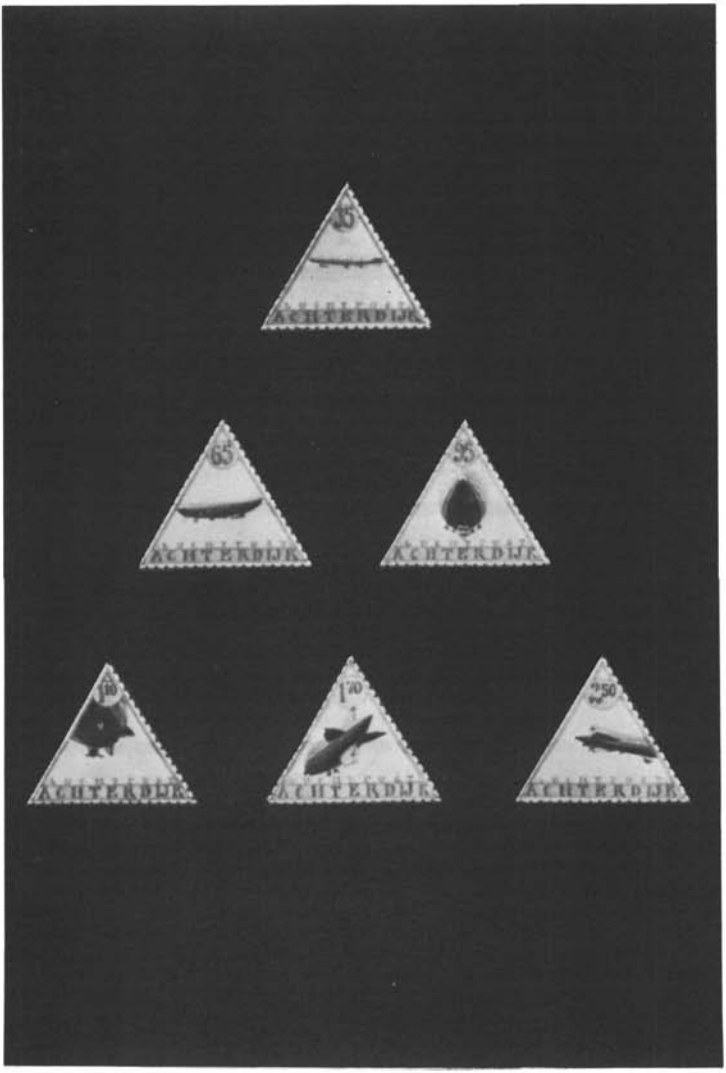

Achterdijk. 1932. Airpost (1974)

"When I moved from New York to Holland in 1972, it was to the countryside—Achterdijk 27, Schalkwijk (Utrecht), and it was there that I began again to make stamps. So Achterdijk was one of the first Dutch words to be learned: Achter-dijk (behind-the-dike) struck me as perfectly Dutch—a surrogate for Nederland: Neder-land (Nether-land). These airpost stamps were to record the approach and passage of a mail-carrying dirigible, painted in the dull colors I like to use to help suggest stamps of the period . . ."

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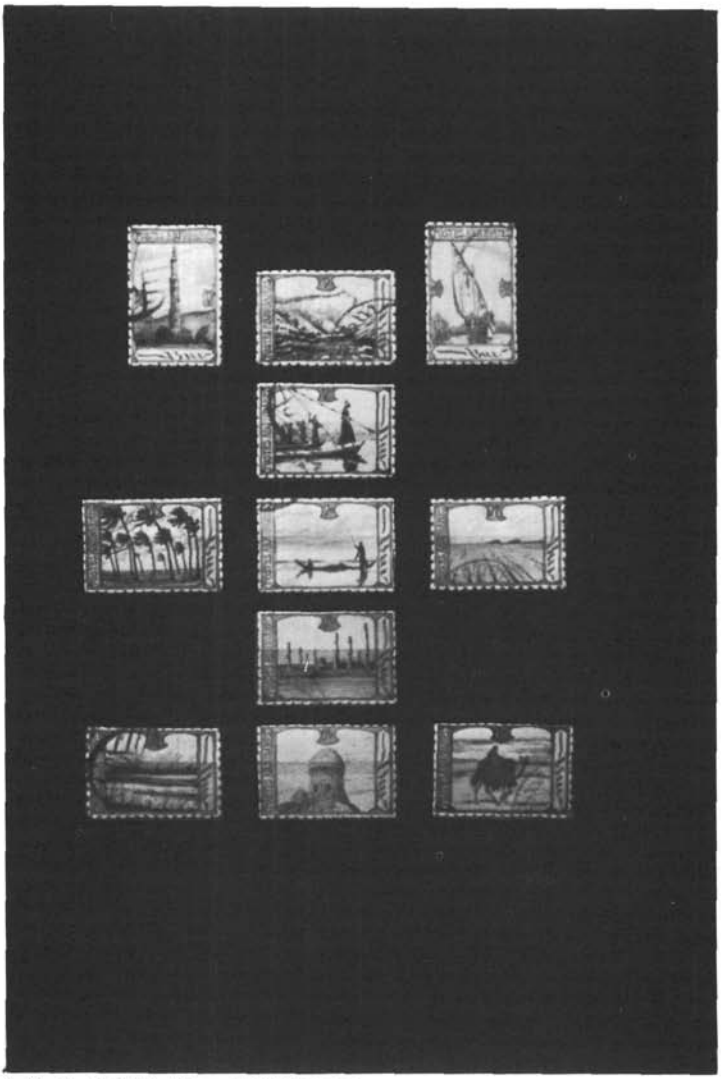

Adjudani. 1929. Pictorials (1974-75)

"Adjudani is eastern and desert-like—expansive—and with minarets and mountains and some water—a coast-line perhaps, camel caravans etc. The name came to me from a friend in Amsterdam who told me his father's name was Adjudani. He never knew his father—his mother had told him he'd been fathered by a Persian Jew whose name meant 'Jewish' in Persian. I thought that was terrifically exotic. And then he signed his name: R. Buis in a script which resembled written Arabic. All Adjudani stamps bear his signature and the inscription POSTES ADJUDANES—French being the international language at the time . . ."

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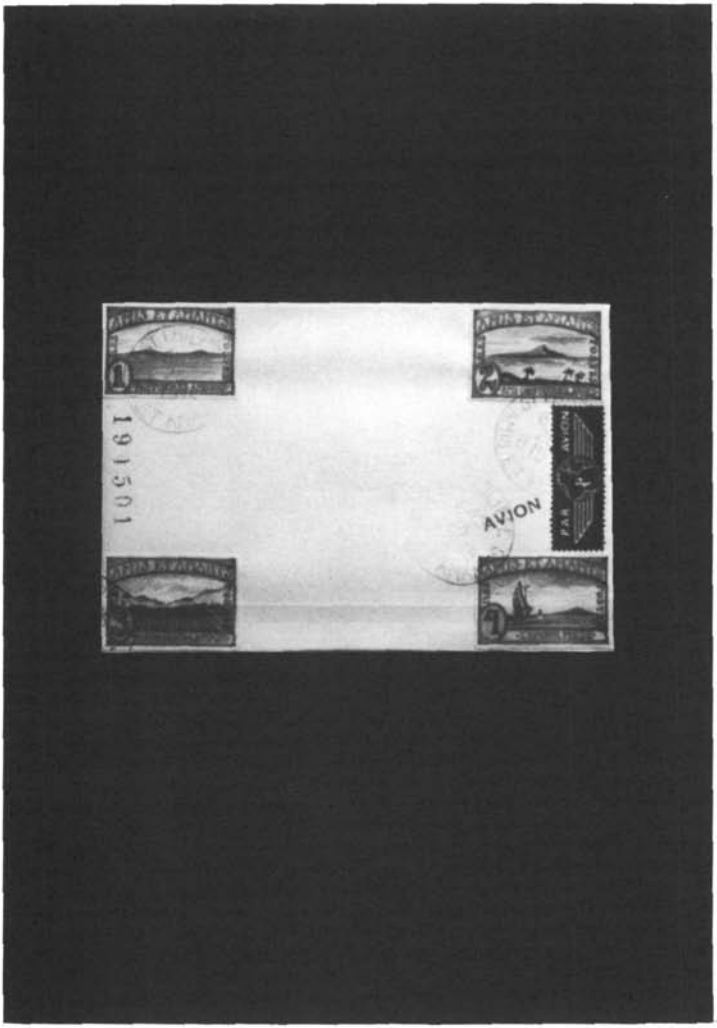

Amis et Amants. 1945. Island landscapes (1974)

"This means Friends and Lovers which is extra-special in French because it is alliterative. . . . These are landscapes in an Archipelago of islands each named for a condition of love or friendship: Premières Amours (Puppy Love), Amis des Beaux Jours (Fair Weather Friend), Main-dans-la-Main (Hand in Hand), L'Amour Perdu (Lost Love). Premières Amours is at one end of the archipelago and L'Amour Perdu at the other. It is very small and a boat which has sailed away from it is in the center of the stamp. There are stamps from other islands: Engoument (Infatuation), La Fleurette (a Flirt), Appetit du Sexe (Sexual Appetite) . . ."

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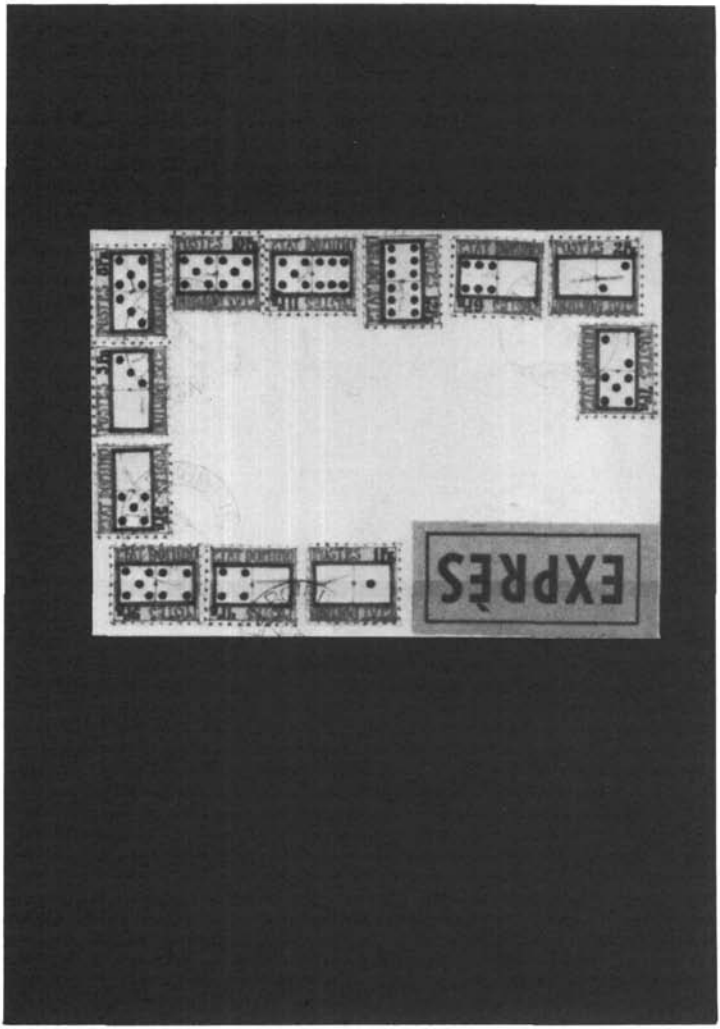

Domino. 1930. Dominos, on express cover (1974)

"This is a stamped express envelope from a country called Domino. Dominos for the fun of playing with them—the way they look and the way they feel and the way they sound knocking together. Twelve in a series, expressing values (counts) from one to twelve, laid out as in a game. I used a real French express label and then the postmark is stamped on with a rubber stamp I carved out of a plastic eraser. I have a cigar box full of rubber stamps I've made for places in all my different countries—sometimes a cancellation makes the work look more 'real' or helps to obliterate a painting error. It is always an 'addition' but the stamping too can go wrong—I tear up the painting then and start over. This envelope is unaddressed, though sometimes I have addressed them to made-up people from that country or even real people."

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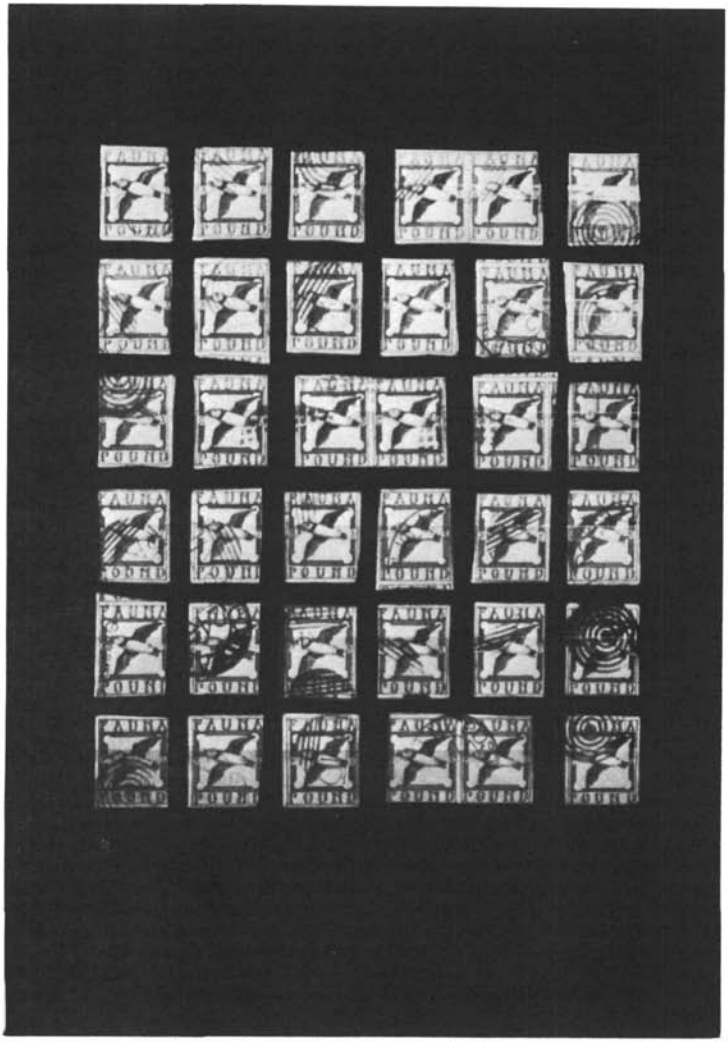

Fauna. 1868. Full pane of pound value: "Gluback Reconstruction" (1975)

"I'm working on a book which will carry an introduction by one invented Professor Gluback (of the Royal Philatelic Society) whose renown is based primarily on his having searched out enough examples of this extremely rare old 'high value' puffin stamp from Fauna to reconstruct a full sheet. Each example bears a plate position designation: a letter on the left and a number on the right in an oval gap midway in the frame. Most examples are postmarked—one with a rare "Steamboat" cancellation in 1868 (E1). Fauna was later (1925) incorporated into the Union of Fauna and Flora and a new set of "definitives" was issued: twenty-five stamps of eggs of native birds."

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Katibo. 1957. Women of Katibo (1975)

"Katibo, a black revolutionary country, was originally a colonial possession called simply "*Etat d'Outre-Mer*" *(Overseas Territory). Its first issues were* the original colonial stamps overprinted with the word "Katibo," which means a "black man who sets himself free"—suggested by a friend, Lucien, who, though he lives in Holland, is Surinamer. This issue are the country's new stamps: proud tribal women from the countryside, officials and university students—representatives of the new Katibo as opposed to the old downtrodden overseas territory. The denominations on the stamps are named for my friend, Lucien, and range from 1 Lucien up to 1 Riekje, which is worth 100 Luciens and is the name of Lucien's Dutch wife; Lucien doesn't seem to mind that it takes 100 of him to equal 1 Riekje."

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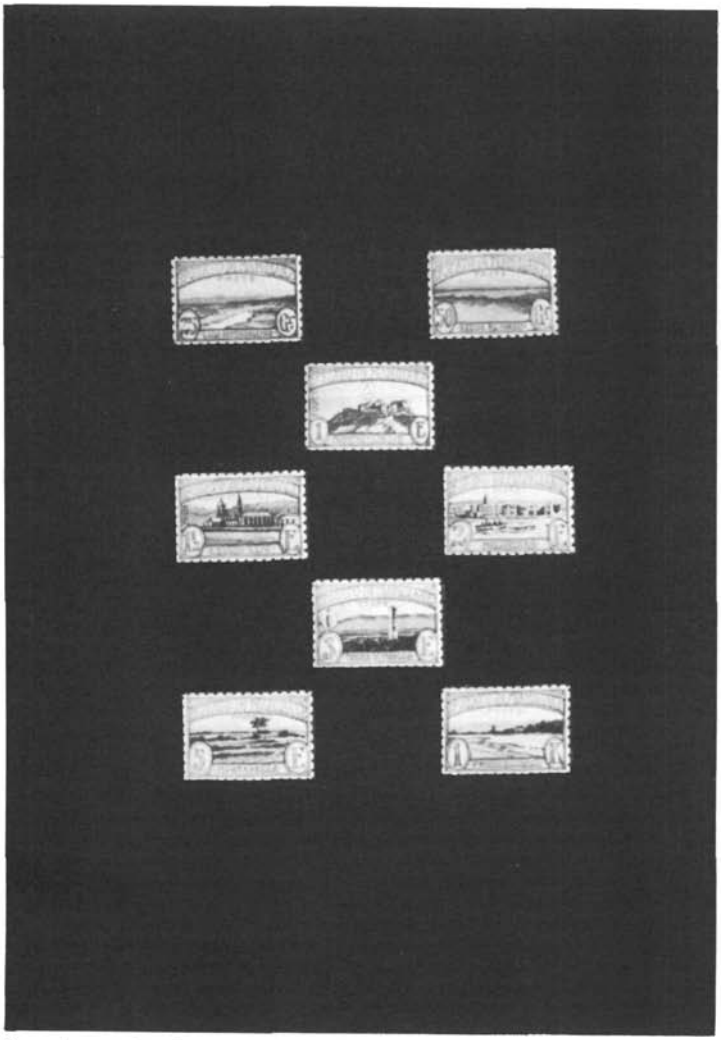

Mangiare. 1940. Gastronomic landscapes (1974)

"Lo Stato di Mangiare is one of the Italian language places I make stamps for, resulting from a trip to Florence and inspired by menu entries. With a currency based on units of weight these "pictorials" promote attractions like: il Lago Divinobianco (Lake of White Wine), Arista al Forno (Roast Pork), Monteciliegie (Mountain of Cherries) and the monastic complex of S. Edano Rapa (Celery Root) on the 1½ etti (150 grams, or 1½ "ounces"). Read also: Melanzana (Eggplant), il Torre di Pisello (Tower of Pea), Mortadella and the settlement of Funghi alla Greca ("Champignons à la Grecque"). In each case the color of the stamp corresponds to the color of the food."

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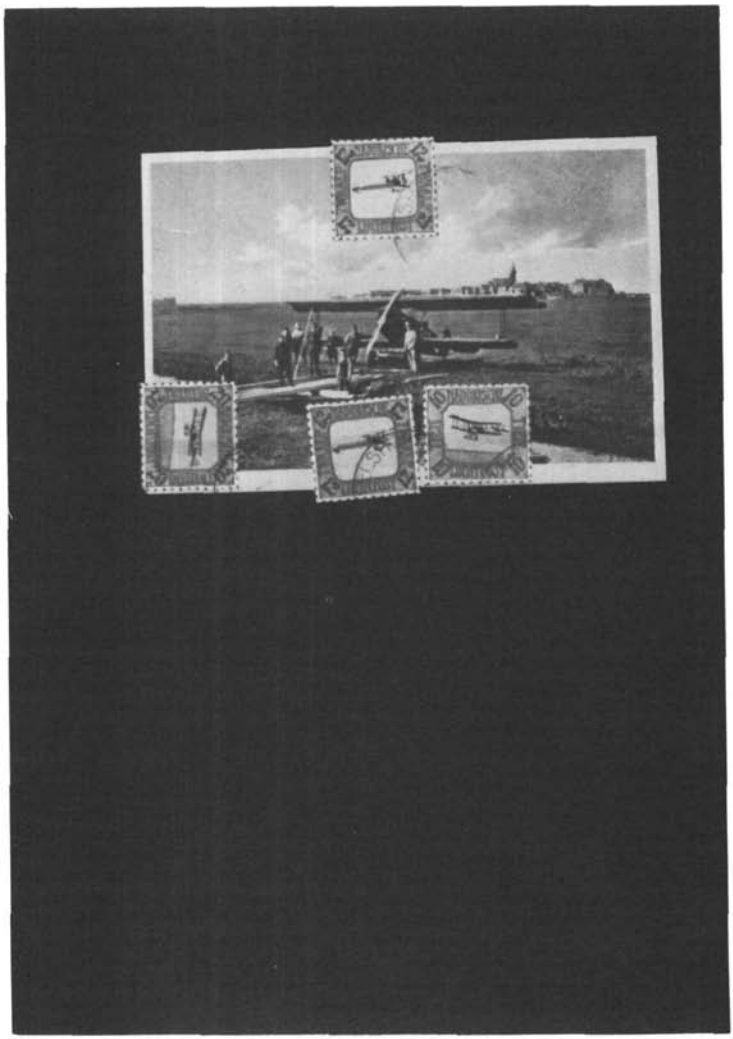

Nadorp. 1922. Airpost stamps of 1919, 1921 on souvenir postcard (1974)

"The postcard is a souvenir from one of the first airmail flights that took place in the principality of Nadorp. The stamps are early Nadorp airmail stamps which were mailed on an early flight and later sold to a collector. Nadorp is named after a person I knew when I first went to Holland with a scintillating, strong personality that suggests a lot about this country. Nadorp is a Dutch family name that probably comes from Na-Dorp (after-the-village). My first stamps from Nadorp bore portrait vignettes of Nadorp himself; these were later dropped after I was accused of "stealing his personality." Another Nadorp showed up at an exhibition in Amsterdam to buy everything I had made from the country; he was so pleased to see his name repeated again and again on the stamps."

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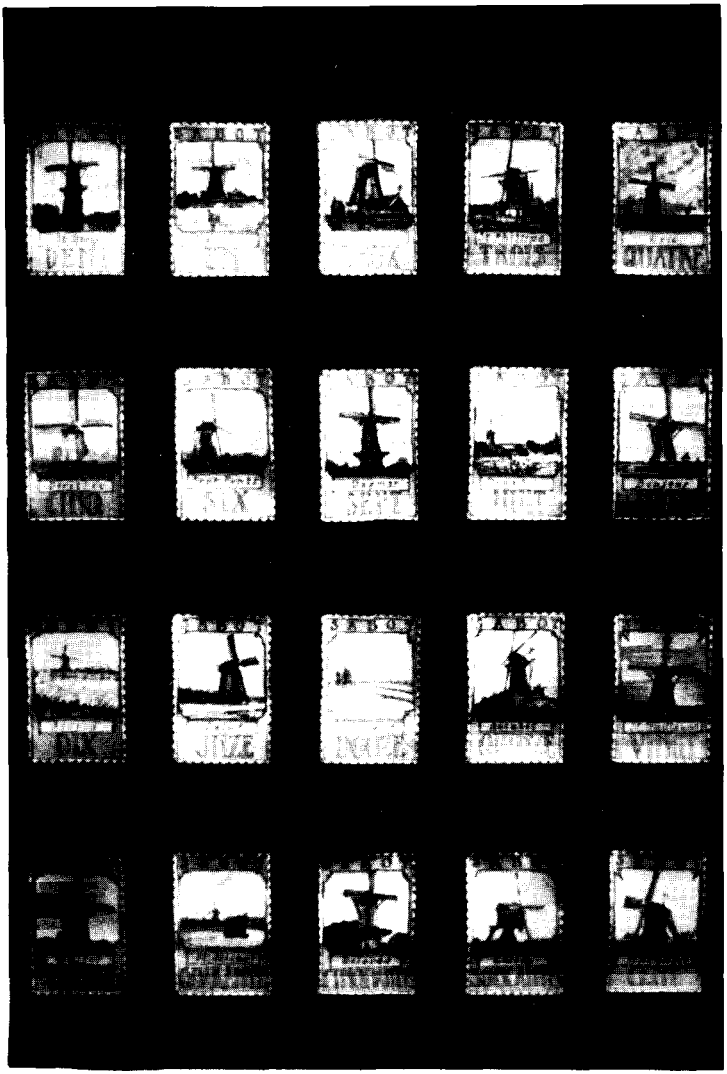

Sabot. 1968. Windmills (1974)

"Sabot means a wooden shoe, and sabotage means literally throwing a shoe into the machinery. Each windmill is different, and from a different place. I was inspired to do them from a trip through Holland in a car. . . . The highway from Amsterdam to Paris has so many windmills. The places are named after friends of mine: Xiane and Eric are my dealers in Paris, Walter is a Dutch friend from the Hague. The dirigible airpost of Sabot (see cover) means simply 'Directed.'"

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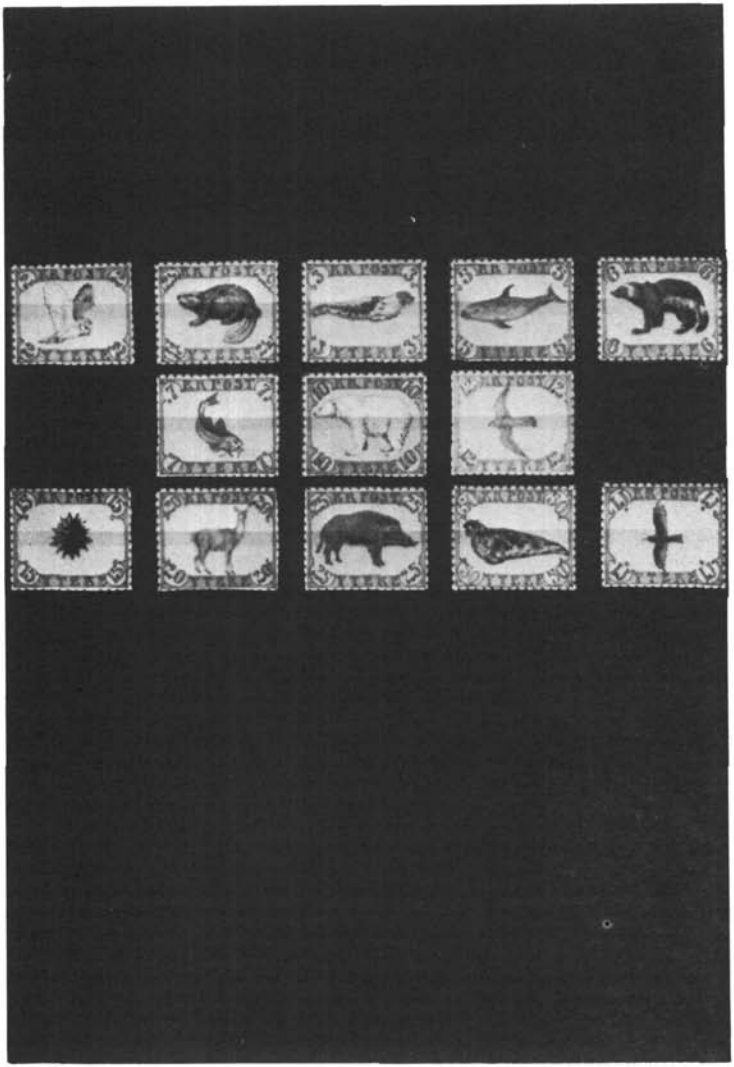

Yteke. 1930. Animals of Yteke (1974)

"Yteke, when I first met her, was a dancer with the Nederlands Dans Theater, the national modern company in the Hague. A very special and spectacular charismatic dancer. Her constitutional intolerance for touring in hot climates, even performing under stage lights, forced her to leave the company. So her country is northern and comfortably cool, with a composition of provinces named for intimate friends and parts of the body. This series is based on an earlier one painted in 1973 and issued by the twin kingdoms, Lichaam en Geest (Body and Soul), which were later to unite under the new name."

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Time and the Jungle

Ken Brower

The old man inserted the green betelnut between the molars of his good side, and bit it in half. He thoughtfully removed the nut. He planed away a little of the inner pulp, carefully, with a battered, broad-nailed thumb. This old man was one of the sixteen chiefs of Belau, but he had a laborer's hands. The hands had suffered accidents, and the arms were patterned with blue tattoos in the old style. He shook powdered lime onto the nut—a good deal of lime, more than most Belauans used—and he wrapped the halves together in a fragment of pepper leaf. He pushed the package into his cheek, and after a moment began to chew. When he was ready to spit, he fished in his betelnut bag, woven of pandanus, and brought out an empty plastic Breck bottle, his spittoon. The shampoo bottle saved him trips to the window. He spat in a bright red stream, then placed the bottle on the floor.

The anthropologist made a small note of the "Breck" bottle in his margin. He noted also that the old man's great grandson was working nearby, to the music of a transistor radio. The

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song was "Hey Jude," and the anthropologist noted the title in his margin. He lifted his pencil from the notepad and waited for the old man to answer.

The question had been about Onguul, the Belau Islander who in 1916 had declared himself Messiah. The anthropologist had asked, before the old man began on his betelnut, what it was about Onguul that had convinced so many islanders. What quality. Was it his face? His oratory? Something in his manner?

The old man sat chewing and remembering many things about Onguul. He remembered the impressive things about the man. Onguul had filariasis of the testicles and they were greatly enlarged. This deformity had a lot to do with the awe of the people. *That* would interest the American anthropologist, the old man knew, but he didn't know the English word for filariasis. His English was not good enough to describe the traits of the disease.

"I don't know," he said.

The anthropologist tried again.

"Do you remember how he looked?"

"No."

"No? Well, it was a long time ago, of course."

"I never know him," the old man said.

"You didn't?" The anthropologist was disappointed. "But they told me you were friends. I thought you were from the same village."

"I was in Ponape then. I never see him."

This was not true. As a young man, the old chief had seen Onguul as often as he wanted. They were in the same clan. They were acquaintances. But the old man was tired of this conversation and wanted to end it. This was not a good anthropologist, he had decided. This anthropologist was not smart enough. He was too young. He believed things just because you said them. The old man had been a favorite informant of anthropologists for decades, as his father had been before him. He was a connoisseur of anthropologists. This anthropologist was asking old questions; the answers

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were in books. The German ethnologists were generally better, the old man believed, though this was mostly his father's opinion, for when the Germans were here, the old man himself had been too young to be interrogated.

"Was it his actions, do you think, that made the people believe?" asked the anthropologist. "Was it the things he did?"

"Yes."

"Like bringing the dead woman to life?"

"Yes."

"And it was in Ngeremetengl Village that he brought the woman to life?"

"Yes. Ngeremetengl."

"How did he do it? How did he go about it?"

"I don't know. I don't believe he did it."

"You don't believe he really brought her to life?"

"No."

"It was a trick then?"

"Yes. He fools the people. That lady is sleeping. She is not dead."

This was not true. The old man with his own eyes had seen Onguul bring the dead woman to life, but he knew what the anthropologist believed, and what would sit most comfortably with him.

The old man abruptly put his Breck bottle in his betelnut bag. He stood and shook hands with the anthropologist. It was his sign that the interview was over. The anthropologist was surprised, but polite.

"One last question, *Rubak*. Do you think Onguul believed he was the Messiah?"

"No."

"Then why did he say it?"

The old man shifted the betelnut bag on his shoulder. "Money. He wants to make money. He wants to be rich."

In fact the old man was undecided about Onguul. He did not know if Onguul was the Messiah. He was unsure exactly who Onguul was. But if he was certain of anything, it was that

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Onguul was unconcerned with money.

Earlier the anthropologist had noticed that the great grandson seemed interested in the discussion of old customs. The boy had drifted closer and had seemed to listen, gazing out the window as if he saw, in the sunlit banana leaves outside, the old life of his people. The boy had moved close again for this story of Onguul. Now, walking to the door with the old man, the anthropologist reflected on the rapport between the young and old. He was pleased to see it here. The island culture might yet survive in the memories of boys like these, he thought.

"I see your grandson likes to learn about the old life," he suggested. "He likes to listen."

"Him?" asked the old man, genuinely surprised. "No, he does not care."

This was true; the boy did not care at all.

The old man had an appointment with the anthropologist at the same time the next day, but he broke it. "Tell him I am going hunting," he told his granddaughter as he left the house. He was not going hunting. He no longer owned a gun. He was really going to the limestone islands to find a certain plant he needed. He had decided to make a medicine that would take him to another country.

He went down to the water and stepped cautiously into his boat. He bailed it out, and started up his little outboard. The outboard was his most valuable possession. It was really all he owned, besides his clothes and tools and bicycle. In the old days he would have owned more, but in the past decades the power of the chiefs had declined. Rank meant little anymore, unless you were one of the three or four highest chiefs. But the old man was comfortable. People said that his granddaughter did not take good care of him, and this gossip annoyed him. She took good enough care of him, he thought.

The old man headed for Urukthapel, the largest of the limestone islands. The plant he wanted grew there. He had not been to Urukthapel for forty years, yet he remembered the way

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through the fringing reef and was able to follow it without thinking. He had traveled that way hundreds of times, and the last time seemed just yesterday. The forty years were a moment. And yet they weren't, of course. The old man asked himself how it could be that he had not set foot on Urukthapel for so long. He was ashamed of himself. It had taken an anthropologist to drive him away to Urukthapel. Good for the anthropologist!

From a distance, Urukthapel appeared to be all steep virgin jungle, unbroken from waterline to summit, but as the old man drew closer, he saw that beneath the canopy of trees there was a trail. He remembered, then, that the Japanese had built a fortification on Urukthapel. He had forgotten. He had never seen this fortification. It had been built since the last time he visited.

The old man tied up his boat in the mangroves of the island's shore and walked a ways down the trail. The trail had been a road once, he could see, but the forest was reclaiming it. The road had been narrowed to a path, and someday would be gone entirely.

The limestone of Urukthapel did not hold much soil and supported few large trees. Instead there were many small trees, admitting much light, and the trail switchbacked upward through a sunny, dappled greenness. As the old man started slowly up the trail, two men came down it. They appeared suddenly around a bend, and were as surprised as he was. They too had thought they were alone on the island. They carried .22 rifles. They were men of low clan whose faces he recognized but whose names he did not know.

"Good morning, Rubak. Are you lost?" asked the first man.

"No. I am searching for a plant. And you?"

"We are hunting fruit bats," the man said. His companion smiled at this.

It was not true, the old man knew; these men might shoot a fruit bat if they saw one, but it was pigeons they were after. Pigeons were protected birds. The old man did not approve of

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poaching. The pigeon law was just a regulation passed by the American government, but it was a good law. It was better if people obeyed the laws. The old man started up the trail again.

"*Meikung*," he called back to them.

"Meikung," they answered.

The old man walked slowly and rested often. As he made his way upward he thought over his life. He remembered all the typhoons of his life, and all the bad sicknesses. He counted them off in his mind and remembered something about each of them. He remembered the first automobile he saw. He remembered the deaths of his sons. For some reason he remembered the first death best, and the last. He remembered the day the Japanese arrested Onguul, and the time Onguul brought the dead woman to life. He remembered Ichiro Kondo and Shunryu Abe. He remembered the phosphate mines. He remembered the mistakes he had made. He had made some poor choices. He had not been a very good politician. The Japanese had used him. But he had made some correct choices too, of course.

Walking was good for the memory. He had many things to remember, for he had lived longer than almost any Belauan. He remembered German times and he could almost remember Spanish times. The Spaniards! But he was not that old, of course. He remembered running away from German mission school. That memory must have been nearly his earliest, he thought. He remembered some of the German priests, or brothers, but he could not quite recall their faces or their names. He did remember their big beards. He remembered his travels; New Guinea, Guam, Ponape. He remembered jail. He remembered coming home to Belau after ten years away. He remembered the parrot he had owned, and the shotgun. And the blowgun. A *blowgun!* What an ancient man he was! He remembered the dugong he killed, and all the crocodiles he speared. He remembered the great migration of *ngeriil*. He remembered the two stonefish and the one lionfish that had poisoned him. He remembered the huge grouper in

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the pass to Ngossol Reef. What a grouper! He remembered the time Isidoro and the shark killed each other. Isidoro had been stupid to bother the shark. Isidoro and his war with sharks! He remembered the big hunts on the lagoon, when everyone in Belau was out on the water. He remembered fire-fishing. He remembered the mullet net. The people set it out at high tide. The mullet did not like being inside the net when the tide got low, and they tried to jump out. The people would walk together, constricting the net, and would catch the jumping mullet with hand nets. So many ways, the old man thought; we had so many ways to catch fish. He remembered the duels with Isidoro and Ruluked over who would spear the most. The three of them were on the water for days and days, under the sun, diving and diving in their goggles and sometimes resting a little on the bamboo raft. "We were black!" the old man thought. "Blacker than negroes! Our wives wouldn't speak to us!"

Suddenly the old man stopped. Ahead were two huge coastal guns. They were big Japanese guns and they lay across the trail like felled trees. Near the breech of the first lay an unspent shell. He approached, bent down, and touched the dense cool metal of the shell. He saw that a third cannon stood off the trail, still upright, with its protective shield in place. The old man studied the guns. He walked over and tried to open the breech of the upright gun, but it was rusted shut. Ferns grew along the entire length of its barrel. He walked back to the trail and straddled one of the fallen guns. He sat down on it, and looked around him. He saw that although it was the American bombs that had knocked the guns over, it was the jungle that was finishing them off. He studied the guns for a long time.

"The forest is destroying them," he said, aloud.

He resumed walking upward. As he walked he remembered the war. He had been in a war before, and had thought he knew what war was like; but in that first war only twenty-six people had died. The real war, between the Japanese and Americans, had seemed at first like the end of the world. He

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remembered the fires and explosions over the southern islands, all night long, and the red tracer bullets traveling back and forth, searching for someone to kill. The next morning the southern islands were as green as ever, though the people expected them to be burned black, at the very least, or gone entirely. The people were right in the end, for after many such nights the islands were no longer green, and by the finish of the war Beliliyo was ruined. After the first week of fighting the people had names for all the different American planes. The children could tell what kind of plane it was just by the sound of the engines.

The old man passed the shattered eye of a searchlight, aiming blindly skyward. He passed the black openings of caves that the Japanese had dug into the limestone. He came to a level area just below the summit, where rows of white concrete pilings rose, like toadstools, from a wet litter of dead leaves. These pilings had once supported a building of considerable size—the headquarters for the island's small garrison, he guessed. It was here that the Japanese soldiers slept. Scattered among the pilings were beer bottles of a heavy, dark-brown glass, with Japanese characters inscribed around the base of each. The old man was a lover of languages and he enjoyed reading—he read every sign and piece of print he saw—but he had never learned to read Japanese. He wondered what the characters said. "Not to be refilled"? "No deposit, no return"?

Nearby, sunk in the leaf litter of the jungle floor, was a Japanese communal bath, half full of rainwater and floating dead leaves. As the old man gazed at the bath, he changed his mind about the plant he had come to find. He decided not to bother looking for it.

He continued upward. On the summit itself there was a round tower. The trees of the summit grew so slender and so close together that the old man was ten feet from the tower before he saw it. He had nearly bumped into it before realizing that it was not simply a dense copse of trees, but a structure. It was solid concrete, with a ladder on the outside: an

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observation tower. From it the Japanese officers had directed the gunners of the big batteries below. The heavy iron rungs of the ladder were bent and twisted, as if heated in a blacksmith's forge and beaten with his hammer. The rungs had been heated, all right, but the fire was wet and green. It was the hammer and forge of time and the jungle.

The old man slowly climbed the ladder, resting on each rung. The tower's forty feet were just enough to clear the stunted trees of the summit. The moment he poked his head above the canopy, he entered the bright domain of the birds, and they were all around him. From on top, the old man could see in every direction. The limestone islands were arrayed below him, dozens of them, as green and unmarked as they had been for his ancestors.

The old man sat down on the tower. The flat top was pocked with bullet holes, and the iron railing was wildly twisted. The bullet holes could have been made only by strafing American planes. The old man reconstructed the scene in his mind. Once the roar of warplane engines had filled the air here. The planes had banked away at the last moment.

The only aircraft now, circling the tower silently, were fruit bats, tropic birds, and terns.

"Good!" the old man said. He repeated the word in all the languages they had taught him. "*Yorosii!*" he said. "*Mauleg! Mau! Mengsangmau!*" Last, in the Belauan tongue, his first, he said, "*Ungil.*" The word seemed to fit this jungle better than the others. "*Ungil,*" he said again.

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Diane Ackerman

STILL LIFE

The bullet has almost entered the brain:
I can feel it sprint down the gunbarrel
rolling each bevel around like a hoop
on a pigslide of calibrated steel and oil.
Now it whistles free and aloft
in that ice-cold millimeter of air,
then boils as the first layer of skin
shales off like ragged leaves of soap.
The trigger's omnipresent click
makes triggers all over the body fire
to the sound of Japanese shutters closing
one by one a skein of threads.
Now it tunnels through palisades,
veins, arteries, white corpuscles
red and battered as swollen ghosts,
cuts the struts on a glacial bone
jutting out like the leg of a single flamingo,
feints and draws in close for the kill,
egged-on by a mousegray parliament of cells.

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Naomi Lazard

GRAND OPENING

This showroom is now open.
You will see the most complete collection
of debris fashioned into the necessary shapes.
Current trends
have been taken into consideration.
Each shape consists of parts
made of heavy gauge metal:
all parts, moving or otherwise,
are soldered into place,
not simply pasted or pinned.
This feature is the well known bonus
distinguishing our product
from its imitators.

The recent ruling
regards the acquisition of an article
such as the ones on exhibition.
Come in immediately.
Reserve yours; you may pay for it later
with any of the major credit cards.

A brief summary:
From the specified date
you must in some manner
carry wherever you go
a shape made of metal
of the ordained weight and size.
This shape need not be fastened
to your body; it may be carried or lugged
behind. It must be with you at all times.
If you prefer

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you may cart it on the back of a truck,
shackle it to your car;
or put it into a hand-cart.
For those of you who use a bicycle
or are still too young even for that,
we have a line of sleds
which can be pulled by a rope.

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Albert Stainton

A GARNISHED PEACH AT THE GRAND-HOTEL POLAND

I took the trip just to try it
in spite of warnings from friends
about over-cooked borsht, dreary
new government housing projects,
difficulty obtaining visas,
and generally bad accommodations.
They were more or less right,
but the garnished peach
at the Grand-Hotel Poland
made up for every inconvenience.
Served only in the main *salle*,
a complex hall extended by mirrors
and tarnished arches,
it was borne in on its own
aluminum tray, with a domed oval
cover, which, when drawn off,
revealed a form in a perfect state
of natural preservation
that had withstood bakings
and all the other culinary processes
that the cooks had lavished on it.
Wild grasses or crushed herbs
coated it like ground glass, so
I asked for an extra-large
side order of kasha, just to make
my enterprise look legitimate.

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Jonathan Holden

ROLLER COASTER

This roller coaster was condemned
in 1925. You remember that, how the shingly
underpinnings creak as the cars go clacking
over them above. But you get in anyway.
The guy that takes your tickets, like some
cheap abortionist's assistant, wipes his
hands on his ass, he doesn't care much
if you live or die. So you hang onto this
paint-chipped bar the way you'd bite
the pink eraser the quack doctor gave
you to keep from swallowing your tongue
as he starts to put you under, cranks
the seat up for the operation, up over
the midway in the night air seeping up
from Lake Hopatcong's seedy plumbing
up to the top, and suddenly it's
all true what they said: you were crazy
to come here. Hang on, bite, this operation's
on, you want to faint, you can't, he's taking out
this dirty pocket knife, this spoon, but
the anaesthetic isn't working, you're going
to hemorrhage, the wind is rising in your ears,
ripping tears out, you've got to close your
eyes because you're going over the edge, he's
crazy, he's made a mistake, slipped, wham, the
chair's out of kilter, this is an emergency,
everything's coming apart in tatters, screams

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fragments blowing past your ears, this guy is
crazy, he keeps on working, gnashing you around
but you've come out of it, you can remember
everything, the whole abortion, it's over,
your death's been pulled right out of your insides
like your breath, only you can get your breath
back again, you've come through.

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Susan Bartels

ALL MY ORIFICES ARE TOO SMALL

You laugh when I tell you, but it is truth.
Countless physicians have affirmed it, according
to their various specialties. The oral surgeon,
removing my five wisdom teeth (yes, there really
were five. Some people, he said, grow eight,
two where normal people have one, upper and lower,
right and left. My extra one was upper left)
remarked that my mouth was extraordinarily small.
Friends snickered, but I had known for some time.
A grinning orthodontist, when I was twelve, insisted
that my oral cavity would not accommodate everything
necessary, and he removed four large and perfectly
healthy canines. And then there have been the matters
of ears and nose, so easily irritated by the tiniest
foreign matter. Oh the hours I've spent draining
those narrow tubes. Though delicacy prevents my going
into detail, hemorrhoids are another
manifestation. Gynecologists, too, acknowledged
that a head would be hard pressed to make it through *that*
passage. And they were right. The alternative
was not entirely pleasant, and I no longer wear
bikinis, but there are obvious compensations.
Some of us will do anything to assert our
individuality. I do not maintain, of course,
that these problems are totally distinctive, but
you will have to admit, my claim is somewhat unique.

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Two Poems by Steven Rea

DREADFUL LOVE AFFAIR

I am dying now from a bite on my neck
that doesn't stop bleeding. I'm trying
to carry on a normal existence, not
let anyone know I've only got a few days
left. I'm wearing turtle-neck sweaters
to cover the wound, I go off to the bath-
room every hour or so and soak up the blood
with a new handkerchief. This is no way
to live! I shall just resign myself
to death . . . here Death, take this resignation.

The bite was caused by the Swedish vampire
I've become so enraptured with of late.
She deceived me into thinking she was my
friend. And she was. All my days I've been
an incurable romantic; the only difference
now is that I'm an incurable romantic with an
incurable wound. Before I breathe my final
breath I want a telephone. I will call her
in Stockholm and tell her that I'm doing fine.
I will talk small-talk and make a joke or two,

then when I die I'll let the nurse hang up.

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DREADFUL WAFER

My wife has just taken another
dreadful wafer. I am more than
3000 miles from her, but I know she
did. Every time she takes one
a strange nervous quirk goes through
my guts, it even hurts.
When she takes them
she gets in her little black car
and goes out and attacks border
patrol officers or my best friends.
There was the one time she led a dog
from its house, kicked it in the
balls and then ripped its tongue out
while it moaned and whimpered.
An unpleasant image, and at the time
I was 6000 miles from home but
in my dream I saw all this.

It isn't entirely her fault: I have
dreamt of two German shepherds
slowly eating a swan in a paper
sack, and my wife had nothing to do
with that. But these wafers . . .
her eyes become cold and fiery,
her lips blue with fever, her
hands slippery and her hair splayed

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against the bed mixed with blood
and small creeping insects.
When I am 12,000 miles from her
she will take her head
and throw it off a cliff. Her body
will wave goodbye, turn around,
and tap-dance into the forest
where I will go looking for her
after she's gone.

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Peter Payack

THE ULTIMATE PARTY

All 74 billion people who once
inhabited the Earth, are invited
to a party. The invitations state
8 p.m., and to my surprise give
my apartment as the place. The
dress is casual. They all arrive
within a couple of hours of each
other. But the party's a bomb.
There is very little food, no space,
and the various languages present
a communications problem. After
a while tempers grow short and fights
break out. One in the kitchen is
unusually violent for a party and
a man is stabbed. He turns out to be
the first man. He dies. In turn
everyone else disappears in order
of birth, dating from back almost 3 million
years. This takes some time, and goes
on well into the middle of the night.
Finally I am left alone with
74 billion cups and glasses to clean.
I put it off until morning.

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In the Footprints of the Dinosaur

France Burke

I am one of the howlers: those who, when left alone, whine and howl for the return of they know not what. Piped-in music has been known to help, but only if it is Grand Opera, one kind of howling offsets the other. I have known this about myself for years; but it was not until I watched the tiger at the zoo and realized that it was autistic, that its stripes had become bars and its howling days were over, that I began to take people's decorations more seriously.

As a child, I lived with my mother and father on top of a hill, and I kept my eye on the valley. By squinting, I could make the roads, the river, the clumps of forest, fall into a map; by following where the map took me I soon had a fairly clear idea of things, but I couldn't decide what I wanted to be when I grew up.

One day I drew a large eye, painted it blue, and hung it in my window, facing out. That afternoon the neighbors complained to my mother.

"Take it down. It makes them nervous," Mother said.

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So I put the eye in our living room, facing in.

"What's that thing doing there? Take it down. It makes me nervous," Father said.

I put it in my room so that it could see the map of the valley, but no one could see it. One night, alone in my room, the eye and I located a new people who lived on the valley floor in the footprint of a dinosaur. No one bothered with them, and what they needed, they drew. They were good artists and provided well for themselves, even producing representations of 'peace' and 'hope', but they had been careful not to complete the bottom lines of the huge beast that was hanging there, blocking out the direct rain and some of the light, because finishing it would have crushed them.

This interested me enormously because my father was in the antique business, and I saw parts of things—arms, heads, jaguars without eyes, feet without legs but with one accompanying knee—all the time. My father worked in restoration, but conservation had always been his hobby, and preservation was his main aim. He and Mother had given money to the Irish Works for the excavation of Queen Maeve's tomb, even though it hadn't been used for that; and they were one of the first to come through after the disastrous floods in Florence; and for years they helped out on American Indian digs after the Ford Foundation pulled out.

The new idealism about the old infuriated him, because he had been concerned for so long.

"I'd like to see the color of their money, not just hear their talk," he said. "No statue can have a head in the sky without feet on the ground."

But the drawing of the dinosaur did just that: it hung in the sky, with only three feet on the ground. The people had drawn aqueducts to bring in extra water, reservoirs to store it in, and they had an entire system of lights and mirrors to counteract the shadow it made over them. What they needed to avert the threat was a drawing to remove it, or at the least draw one of them *not* drawing in the last foot—which some of them argued might work, but it was risky. They knew from

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experience it was very difficult to execute the negative in line.

I couldn't interest my father in the problem, because there was a new Venus in the shop. He spent parts of his days and some whole nights studying and admiring it, to the point that my mother began drawing constant attention to the fact that the marble woman had only one arm and a pursed-up way of holding her mouth. She and my father actually began fighting between themselves about whether the statue were beautiful or not!

There were no fights in the footprint of the dinosaur, perhaps because each in turn—upon reaching the end going back to 1 and starting again—became every other. Only at 13 might it happen that one suddenly wanted out of the entire sequence; 13, with evil genius, might try speaking for them all, and 13, at some point, was each of them. It was depressing, and drawings of 'fear' began to appear. When a drawing of 'famine' was found, they all worked overtime drawing food, all types and specialties, until they began to get fat. When they came across a hidden drawing of disease-bearing microbes, a clever one who had just been at 13 (they always wondered about that) drew an endless series of petrie dishes, containing combatant microbes of endless variety, and no one got sick. But now, how to not draw what they did not want to be?

I went down to the shop to ask my parents if they—being in the art business—had any suggestions. There was my father, still holding a bushhammer, and the statue on the floor, torso in one spot and the head three feet away. When I came in he was just picking it up to stroke the tight little mouth.

"That was vandalism!" Mother screamed, shrinking away.

"With two sales we'll have twice as much money to continue our good work," he said.

They were so busy fighting, I don't think they even saw me. After one of these statue decapitations it takes as much as three weeks to a month for the household to settle down. I went back to my room.

The Eye was watching with total concentration; it seems that someone at 16 had had a new idea. Get rid of the entire

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dinosaur, wipe it out, erase it, remove it.

They had drawn ladders when I was away, and drawn themselves climbing up them, reaching towards the upper parts of the beast and rubbing it out. First the spikes of the back disappeared, one by one, and finally the piercing eye (there was only one eye, it was in profile). They were saved and they were rejoicing. Even the one who was 13 at that time cheered, because they all cheered. So did I, but it was a false omen. Before the month of family fighting was half up, they found a drawing of 'flood'. They got together immediately and drew an elaborate network of dams, runoffs, ditches, sluices (now that there was nothing hanging over them they received the full rain); but the next day, during an automatic check, they found that some of the most strategic dams had been erased.

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Two Poems by Jay Meek

GIVING THE FINGER

The devil, for one, is a philanthropist.
He gave so much
God told him to put on mittens.
Even so, he passed it around like a salesman
with a gold pen.
He flashed it at children in heaven.
He flashed it
at boys on the earth who talked back to him.
And their mothers looked down on them
with wild hair blowing.
So he gave it to the mothers.
He gave it to the saints on their feast days.
At last kicked out of heaven,
he held out his hands to brace himself,
or to show he was ten times angry.
His right hand missed the earth completely.
His left landed on Michigan.
Years later, I grew up in the thumb
and learned
to salute the world from Saginaw to Rome.

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TWO GARAGES

A carpenter with one arm built a garage.
Then he built another just like the first.
He put two doors in one, two in the other.
He made latches for both and painted signs
that said No Parking, which he hung true
to the center of each. The one-armed man
made six cottage windows for each door,
although he did not want to see his cars
in particular. So he painted the windows.
In one garage he made six of the twelve
windows white, the remaining six black.
In the other garage he painted only three
windows black, and the other nine white.
Finished, he said. But at the same time
a one-armed man was unloading his lumber
in an anti-universe. He put up one garage,
then he built another just like the first.
If these two guys met, and did enough things right,
the world would end. Love missing parts.

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Two Poems by Paul Hoover

IN BERLIN

At the center of the city I come upon a hill, at the top of which is a very large bird. I see it resembles an eagle. Though it's about 14 stories high, it's as docile as a rabbit. Its foot, I see, is tied to a stout nearby building. The rope used for this purpose is thick, the knot alone having the bulk of a cottage, or a pleasant bungalow. I see also, as night falls, that all over the miraculous bird there are windows from which the residents, framed in the warm yellow light of their domiciles, peer down into the street or out into the star-filled night. I suspect they are kept warm by the heat of its body, suspect also they lead precarious lives, as even the slightest movement, the lifting of a wing, would send their well-stacked dishes spinning into havoc. Yet as long as I watch, the bird gives but one indication that it lives. When the wind blows with great force against its feathers, it seems to shift its weight from one leg to the other, and once or twice its enormous eye blinks like an eclipse.

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THE ALARM CLOCK

I find it, weakly ticking, at the edge of the yard. It's the cheap, round kind a day laborer, whose wife left him long ago, uses to wake himself up in the morning. The casing is light green plastic, a fact which causes the ticking to resonate fully, as if it were emanating from the sound box of a guitar or a cave. It is the sort of clock that in ringing might waddle across a dusty dresser and fall into a drawer of luminous socks. The sort that might escape, given half a chance.

I assume it has fallen from some window and rolled, or crawled on its hands, to this spot. Except for a grass stain and a little mud, it's in perfect condition. I consider also the Lassie variation: having been left in a motel by friendly vacationers, it is struggling cross country toward home. But how far, five hundred, perhaps a thousand miles? I look in awe up and down the road, across the beanfields.

Frankly, I don't want to get involved. Picking it up, I throw it like a softball as far away as possible. It hovers for a moment at the peak of its parabola like a heartbeat over a ballpark. Then it falls with a pathetic little thump.

Now, back at the house, reading the paper, I begin to feel bad. I imagine it ringing all alone in a ditch like a bum having a nightmare. Worse yet, the pathetic running down. The evening edition scattering behind me, I run down the road, hands in the air at ten and two. Already, I see, it has moved halfway back to the house, spinning on its face in advancing circles. *Here you are*, I say, plucking it from the weeds like a sputtering child from a green lake.

Later we sit on the front porch in silent companionship. Its flat pugilist's face reveals little of its feelings, reminds me of Leo Gorcey staring at fireflies. I know there is something black in its past. I can smell anger.

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In the morning, I resolve, I'll drive it to my sister's house in the next county. She has an attic with a cot and a small round window, the perfect hiding place. From the window it will at least be able to see the garden: metallic cabbages, listless corn, beans clutching their way over the fence.

Soon it is beside me on the seat of the pickup, facing forward. We're bouncing along a dirt road, the dust not yet rising high because of the early morning dew. I realize, suddenly, I could be Warren Oates in BRING ME THE HEAD OF ALFREDO GARCIA, chatting guiltily with the rider beside him.

A police siren, like the sun coming up, rings and whines its way nearer from somewhere up the road.

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Georgia Alwan

CHILDREN/EVOLUTIONS

Theresa used to come over every day. I'd be standing by the kitchen window and hear her cowboy boots on the walk. Then she would stand outside the door—I knew—listening for a sound inside, scratching the door with a twig, or reaching up to the handle to pull on it, softly, so no one would hear. She'd call out my name, or yours, always seeming to me so optimistic, so full of wanting to see us. But sometimes I wouldn't go to the door at all, but stay still, my shadow in the kitchen, hear the buttons of her coat against the door and her talking to herself. Then I'd hear her move the handle a little—enough so her eye could see through. I'd be right there, a few feet away, and she would shriek and laugh.

At first she wanted to have everything she saw in the house—a bowl, a glass on the shelf, matches, pencils, and practically everything in the refrigerator. She seemed to be in an ecstacy just asking for things. It didn't matter if she didn't get to keep any of the things she'd pick up and carry over to us, because she didn't know what she wanted them for anyway. She just got a lot of pleasure in asking.

Yesterday, I was starting to straighten up the house, and said she could come in. She wandered around a while, and then said she wanted to draw a picture of me. She sat on the piano bench for a few minutes with a paper on her lap, then asked if I would help her. She had drawn a big round stomach on the page, and near one end, she had put a black dot. Would I draw my head on top of the stomach? With glasses, because she liked the funny me best? She insisted my head go on the end near the belly-button, and watched me do the rest while she described me, saying I must do everything right—all the pleats on my blouse, all the way

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down—the moccasins, the ties on them.

I went back to the kitchen while she did some more drawings, when suddenly she came up with a red candle in her hand. The wax had melted down to form a circle. Then she disappeared and brought another bright orange candle, then two new green ones. I was wiping the counter. There wasn't any sound where she was, but when I turned around she was standing in the middle of the room, clutching the red candle to her. She wanted this one more than any of the others, could she have it? It was deep red and smelled like cinnamon. "I'm going to put everything into this candle," she said.

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Dennis Schmitz

TATTOO ARTIST

I'm the one who corrects the blurred
bodies, those grown uneven,
out of focus with
  loneliness. or if mates
overlap—here a Noah's
  pair, there a hoax of incoherent

parts taught life. if you prefer
  some peculiar
blemish to attract
her love, I'll make a blue
  kiss nest in the hairy

armpit, or trace a little
  cupid like summer love's last
fly alighting
  on a nipple, transpose

rudely done initials
  where a heart should
be. I can copy on your own
body whoever you really
  want: on your front her back

two-dimensional.
her sex arranged around yours—
  you can put your pants on over
all four legs. no one will
know when you lean
  against her in the sub-

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way, or at night submit
    both of you to careful
pleasure. in the mirror you'll relish
    the outline of her
buttocks on you
as you move but never
    see her face tattooed face

down on yours.

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Tom Hansen

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAGICIAN

1

After the rabbits and doves
and the sawed-in-two lady,
slowly unscrew your arms
to show them nothing
is up your sleeves.
Then pry off the top of your head
and bend over—
spilling your brains on the floor—
to show them that there is nothing
between your ears.
Invite them up to the stage
to examine your body;
lie on the table
and tell them to split you open
gullet to crotch;
let them try making friends
with your various organs.

They disconnect your heart;
they watch it stop beating;
they save the blood and distill it;
they drink it down.
They wait for the knowledge of magic
to rise from the vapors,
but nothing
happens.

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They squeeze your stomach
into a ball;
they collect what comes out
of your mouth;
they place the plumber's friend
on your anus
and pump your bowels dry.
They bake it into a pie;
they eat it; they wait.
They wait for the knowledge of magic
to flush through their blood,
but nothing
happens.

Next they sever your testicles;
they mash them into a pulp;
they place the pulp in a centrifuge
and whirl it around the sun.
They bottle it up
in a bottle named MAGIC;
they rub it into their heads.
They wait for the knowledge of magic,
or at least pregnant ideas,
and still nothing
happens.

At last they give up;
they apologize;
they hope you forgive them
whatever.

you smile
you wave your hands
you utter your words,
you hang your bones in the air
you reassemble,
you crawl back into your hat
you disappear

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2

Now you are ready.
Remember these final instructions.
Remember that if they applaud
too soon,
you have failed to make them believe.
And remember to follow
these final instructions
only after the rabbits and doves
and after the sawed-in-two lady.

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Thor

Gretchen Herbkersman

My daughter was born the day the Long War began. In the quiet times during labor, I listened to the explosions, wondering as I drifted into five minutes' sleep whether the bombing had precipitated the contractions, or whether she was so remarkable a child that her entrance into the world should cause a war, a rearrangement of planets not entirely her own.

We are used to war in this country. I mean, we are used by war, as wood is used by flame. Trees have no knowledge of fire in their inner parts until the forest is ablaze, or until they are cut into kindling. I cannot imagine that one gets used to combat or that trees accustom themselves to burning.

I say "we" as if I were a native, but I was then and am still a registered alien. Nearly everyone here is foreign, immigrant, here because they're starved for land and space in which to breathe—but in wartime the air is thick with the smell of chemicals and the dust of blasted buildings, and all the land one can claim, even temporarily, is that

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on which he stands or lies.

I am as foreign as the ones who drop the bombs. I came here, as the invaders say they come, looking for peace. Yet I could never get it into my head to move away from this crowded city which is always the first hit, giving the rest of the country time to mobilize and start sending supplies—blood, drugs, food, young people. This is a city which is always being rebuilt after the last raid. Of course it is never rebuilt.

I would have fought, though I was pregnant. I can handle a rifle, throw a grenade, or drive a jeep. I've done the organizing, too. I think of myself as a peaceful woman, and cannot explain this in myself, that I have killed face-to-face, but there it is.

This time, waking to sirens and detonations, I felt the contractions. Between the war and the baby, I would have a holiday from going to work. I washed and dressed, and into a bag I put my indentification papers, the coins on the bureau, a handgun, an orange, and a handkerchief, laughing at the last addition. "Always carry a handkerchief," my mother said. She could never have imagined this place.

In spite of the heat, I took my shawl. By nighttime, I might be a mother, a different person, and that person might use a shawl. I could have taken a book, to read it or to save it from the war, but books are heavy. I had few other belongings, and it hardly mattered if I left them behind.

My room was on the top floor of a stone building in the Old City. Generations of lodgers had lived there. Nearby stood one of the shrines, even older. Time is preserved in its walls like a fly in amber. Like amber, the walls are easily destroyed. A bomb turns stone to dust in an instant. The dust hangs in the air and the wind blows it away.

I lumbered down the stairs, two flights, and out into the early sun, then across the street and down into the shelter. My living space had been convenient, if nothing else. Someone else could pay the rent if the building stood to the end of the month.

Neighbors and strangers sat on the floor of the shelter. We

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greeted each other. Some of the children had gone back to sleep, and the old people as well. The card-players were at it already. I found a place for myself and began to be afraid. We were close to the border. Perhaps the borders had already changed, how was one to know? We had no radio. We could be taken prisoner, or we could die here, underground, trapped and deserted.

I also felt all the usual fears which, I know now, attend the birth of any child: that it would die, that it would be defective, that I would die, that I would be unable to care for it, that there would be pain beyond endurance, that there would be the indignity as necessary to birth as to making love.

Here we are, I said to the child in my belly, you and I in this country that prides itself on its modern hospitals and its superb medical care, and we are afraid of birth because there is a war—which is not an individual monster, but only people. People like mommy, I said, patting my belly.

The man in charge of the shelter—he was not the warden, the warden was dead and another had not been appointed yet—came to me and asked me how I felt. There were no medical persons in the shelter, he said. There was not even any aspirin. Someone had emptied the first-aid kit, leaving only snake-bite remedy. He looked at his hands and said that there were young children in the shelter. I asked if anyone knew how to deliver a baby, it was my first and I had never even assisted. He went back to the card-players.

After a few hours I decided to go to the hospital. True, it would be crowded with the wounded. Likely no nurses could be spared for maternity, but I would not be an added fear and an obscenity to the people around me. The deciding factor was this, that it was less likely that the hospital would be bombed than the shelter. If the trip through the streets was a risk, it held a chance, at the end, of safety.

They did not want me to go, any more than they wanted me to stay and bear the child in front of them. "I would feel responsible if anything happened to you," said the man in charge.

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"Well, you are not responsible," I replied, at the same time thinking with such fear of going into the street that I thought I would vomit.

One of them, a boy too young to know about killing, gave me his sunglasses. Wrapping the shawl around me, no help for my shivering in the heat, no protection from the blind men in planes, I left the shelter. Some of them called luck after me.

I had to walk. Only military vehicles moved in the streets, and not many of those. Civilian cars and cycles stood abandoned, askew, as if tilted by an earthquake. You would think we'd get used to it, the war, since there's so much of it, that we would drive in an orderly fashion to a safe place; but we never do. We leave the car, the door whining on its hinges, and run for cover. Later we try to find it again, though the landmarks and the street itself have been obliterated.

The shelling was very close, so that the ground trembled. Ahead of me a building burned. I was afraid nearly to paralysis that it was the hospital—that I was trapped, now, outside the shelter, walking to a safety that did not exist. A military person carrying a rifle shouted to me from across the street, "For god's sake, get inside!" as he ran, unpursued, alone, following no one, in the opposite direction.

The weight of the gun in the bag dragged on my wrist. The boy's sunglasses proved too small for me, so I threw them aside—though not liking to discard a gift—and went squinting into the sun. It was like the dream of wanting to run and being unable to run. I wanted to pick up my child, sling it like a pack across my shoulders, and run. My shadow loomed on the wall of the building beside me, fell away into the alley between. The pavement scalded my soles through my shoes. Then a contraction came and I forgot the sun and the heat and even the explosions. When I could see again, I found that I had been walking, I had not even wavered from the sidewalk.

I walked the three blocks to the hospital. People lay or sat about, crowding the first-floor corridors. Some held children. A man cradled a dog in his arms and crooned to it, but the dog was dead. I walked down a hallway, hoping to find some

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private place, trying not to stumble over arms and legs and tubing that fed blood from jars into people on the floor.

A man in white stopped me. "I'm in labor," I told him. He looked at me keenly, and asked if I expected complications. I told him no, only a baby. He laughed then, saying, "You're young and strong," and apologized that there was no bed. He told me there had been a hit near the terminal at the morning rush hour, and many had been hurt, so his facilities were overcrowded.

Someone said, "Here, lady, sit here," and I saw two men in uniform at my feet, looking up at me. "There, now, good girl," said the doctor. He patted me and went off. The older of the two men called hoarsely to the others who sat along the wall, "Move down, move, make room," and they moved. I sat with my back against the wall, and it was a great comfort.

The man who had hailed me offered me a bit of dried beef. "I have an orange," I said. He nodded, but broke off some of his share and gave it to me, and I chewed it. He might have been forty or fifty, but because of the bandages and the dried blood on his face, I couldn't tell. He had lost an eye and part of his leg trying to join his regiment at the front, and he laughed shortly as he said it. The other, who was quite young, sat shaking his head and singing softly from time to time. "Knocked him silly," said the one-eyed man. Then the lights in the corridor went out.

At length a doctor stopped beside me, shining a flashlight across me and then stooping to tell me her name. She put her hand on my arm. "I'm sorry to be so long," she said, "they told me you were here. How are you?"

"I will do," I told her.

She glanced at the man in uniform and then at me. "I'll be back," she said, and gave me the flashlight. She talked then to the man on my right. Around us, medical people worked and murmured in the gloom; an occasional light bounded and came to rest and hung there.

I gave the flashlight to the man with one eye. We set aside the shawl to wrap the baby, and I took off my underpants, so as

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to have a cleaner cloth with which to wipe her. He put all this safely aside, and sat next to me as I lay on the floor, scraping the sweat from my face with his hand. Sometimes his nails caught my hair or his callouses chafed my skin, but he was not afraid of anything he might see or be called to do, so it was good to be with him. If it had not been for him, I would have kept the gun at hand.

He held the orange to my mouth from time to time, for me to suck. They were silent all around me, and I was ashamed to cry out. Once when he put his hand against my face, I bit his finger almost to the bone when the pain came, but he did not cry out either. Later I wondered if he had been ashamed, too.

Near the birth, he said to me in my own language, "Now you must shout." I was amazed to hear the words, but the amazement drowned in the confusion of pain and straining.

"How can I shout," I said when I had my breath again, "how can I shout when he is so brave?" and nodded to the man on my right, who had not made a sound the whole time; and to the others who crowded the corridor as if they still waited for their buses.

"This is not that," he said impatiently. "You must shout now. Bear down hard. I read that somewhere, do you know what it means? Bear down and shout."

I bore down and shouted, and she was born and shouted with me before she came quite free of me. He put her on my belly while he wiped her. Then he cut the cord with his pocket knife and tied it off like a sailor, saying, "You have a daughter."

"Is she all right? How is she?"

He gave her to me. I could see her in the beam of the flashlight. All around us had looked up at her cry, and their faces lighted or despaired, according to the person, to see her and hear her bawl. I named her Thor, for the red god of strength and war, and put her to my breast.

Her hair grew in black curls all over her head, and I laughed, touching them. So that's who your father was. When he was happy, his face lighted like a candle. I don't know if I loved

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him. Certainly I captured his heart for a bit. But loving hardly matters; in the end you're alone just the same, married or free. Better to have captured his conscience—any man's conscience—then we'd have a roof, daughter, and maybe a little less anxiety about food.

When I woke from my thoughts and from dozing, I found that my head was cradled in the lap of the one whom the war had made simple, and he held the flashlight; that the man who was half blind had delivered the afterbirth and tidied me as best he could, covering me with the shawl; and that the man to my right was dead.

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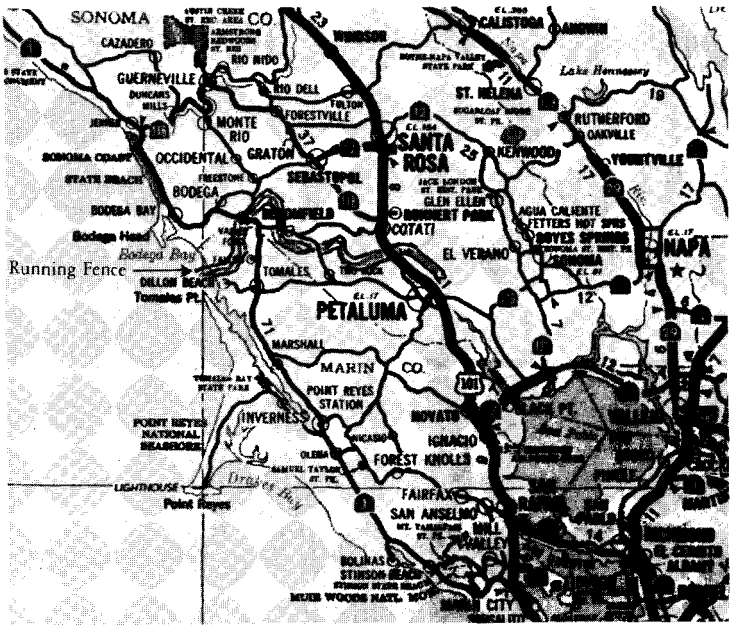
The New Christo Project
Leaning Over the Running Fence



Map depicting route of Running Fence through Sonoma and Marin Counties

Christo is an artist whose temporary environmental monuments have consistently involved the real world outside museums and gallerys. His "projects" are enormous. He has wrapped sections of the Sydney, Australia coast in acre-sized tarpaulins; he has done the same with a bank in Berne.

His most complex American project (before "Running Fence") was realized in Rifle Gap, Colorado in 1971 where Christo and an army of workers suspended a huge orange translucent curtain, 1300 feet wide and 350 feet high, across a canyon where it hung for a few hours until a windstorm tore it down.

Though a finished structure is the aesthetic completion of Christo's idea, it is only the tip of the iceberg. For Christo, the organization of the project, the documentation involved, the human and bureaucratic encounters necessary to produce the final structure are a major part of the work. His confrontation with social and environmental forces is deliberate. His deepest interests lie in dealing with them, just as a politician appreciates the process of a political campaign. "Valley Curtain" of Rifle Gap took two years of intensive planning and engineering—with much of Christo's delight derived from watching the community's attitude evolve from scepticism to enthusiasm and finally support as the project grew.

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Site of Running Fence's emergence from the ocean

On a grander scale, he is going through a similar progression with his newest project: the Running Fence, 18 feet high, will emerge from the ocean and follow an undulating path inland across 24 miles of private properties in Marin and Sonoma Counties, California which is an area of far more complex socio-political-economic pressures than in the canyon of Rifle Gap. The idea of the fence has produced a palaver of responses from the community. While all 59 landowners have now given permission for Running Fence to cross their land, the controversy continues at public hearings and within the larger economic and art communities around San Francisco.

What follows is a portion of a "Fact-Sheet" given to the Board of Supervisors, and excerpts from the public testimony at a hearing called to discuss Christo's project. If all goes well, Running Fence will exist for two weeks in September, 1975.

FACT SHEET*

1. The Running Fence will be a heavy, white nylon fabric, (165,000 yards), hung from a steel cable strung between 2,270 steel poles. The poles, generally 62 feet apart, will be embedded three feet in the ground and braced laterally with guy wires and earth (or rock) anchors. The lower edge of the fabric will be attached to a bottom cable anchored to the ground at about 20 foot intervals.

2. The Running Fence will be a two phase operation. Phase I, installation of the relatively inconspicuous structural parts will take about five months, and will commence in April, 1975 (ed. note: Construction began in May.)

Phase II, installation and tie-down of the entire 24 miles of 2,270 fabric sections is planned to take place in two days, Monday and Tuesday, September 15th and 16th.

3. It is intended that the fence will remain complete for two weeks. However, if it does present a traffic or other safety problem, then that

**Given to the Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County by Running Fence lawyers*

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Typical landscape through which Running Fence will be constructed

portion of the fence will be immediately dismantled. At the conclusion of the two weeks, the whole fence will be dismantled, and all its components will be removed.

4. The fence poles will be set in the soil, *not* in concrete, and adequate space will be provided between the bottom of the fence and ground for the passage of wildlife. A biologist shall oversee construction and removal of the project to insure that it will not have an adverse impact on the wildlife and plant life. Upon removal of the fence, the environment will be fully restored to appear just as it was prior to installation.

5. A minimum of 20 full-time people will be involved over approximately six months. For several weeks there will be more than 300 students and others employed.

6. Eighty trained monitors, equipped with communication equipment and motorbikes, employed in shifts around the clock, will protect the areas surrounding the fence. In addition, vehicles used in the construction of the fence will have fire prevention equipment. A fire fighting plane of the Forest Service will be on call. Christo will pay for an extra squad car and additional off-duty officers to police the area.

7. The cost of the materials and labor necessary to complete this project are approximately $1,050,000.00. The entire amount has been raised by Christo through the sale of his graphics, drawings and other works of art.

8. The Running Fence is designed to sustain winds not exceeding 55 to 60 miles per hour. If winds occur in excess of 60 miles per hour, the upper clips will give way and the fabric will slide down to the ground and will be held by the vertical and lower clips.

9. Christo has agreed to obtain a bodily injury and property damage policy of not less than $1,000,000.00. He will post a removal bond in the amount of $100,000.00 to insure compliance with the permit and that the land is restored to its original condition.

10. Since the Running Fence is an expression of art and not a commercial venture, no effort will be made by Christo to encourage anyone to view the project, nor will he sell any of its by-products.

Upon completion of the project, the only evidence that will remain of the fence will be the preliminary drawings and sketches by Christo, a book and a documentary movie similar to the "Valley Curtain."

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Christo speaking at the Public Hearing of the Board of Supervisors, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County.

TESTIMONY FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING

Christo: It's hard to explain that the work is not only the fabric steel poles or fence. Everybody here is part of my work. Even those who don't *want* to be are part of my work. . . . It is nothing involved with the make-believe. The part of my project is very much to live the real life a little bit like an expedition going to New Guinea or to the Himalayas. . . . But I believe strongly it *is* beautiful because the fabric is a woven nylon and conductor of light and at sunset it will appear as an incredible ribbon of light transversing through all these fences. It can never be seen in its entirety. It will be seen from public roads three or four miles apart. . . . I know there's a lot of outrage at the considerable cost of my project and at the effort that is going into it. But all my money is mine. We haven't a cent from any foundation or any art institute or governmental organization. It's cheap when you think that our capitalistic society can spend five million dollars for less than half an hour watching Muhammad Ali beating somebody. And no one objects to this five million. . . . After completion not one thing will be left—all the material will go back to the ranchers for whom they have a very direct use—these 59 ranchers who will lease their land. We pay rent for their land and we give back all the poles—2200 steel poles—and give all the fabric of the fence back to the ranchers.

Artist: The Running Fence Corporation was incorporated in Illinois. Its principals are residents of New York. Its money comes largely from Europe. Its engineers and principal contractors are from Colorado. The cloth is manufactured outside California. The sewing is being done outside California. The mechanics and posts are being developed largely in Wyoming. The structure was tested and developed in Wyoming. Even the pipe was made in Japan and Germany. The fence is a *fraud*. It all exists for the publicity and glory of one man. It is for his ego and his profit. Are we a bunch of hicks rolling over for the medicine man and his sideshow, awestruck by the man from the big city?

Unidentified Female: Bid this carpetbagger 'adieu'!

San Francisco Art Critic: When Michelangelo came to paint the Sistine Chapel, some monk or bishop or some cardinal probably questioned the *rationale* preceeding *that* decision. Unquestionably, the same concern will be raised about the Christo Running Fence.

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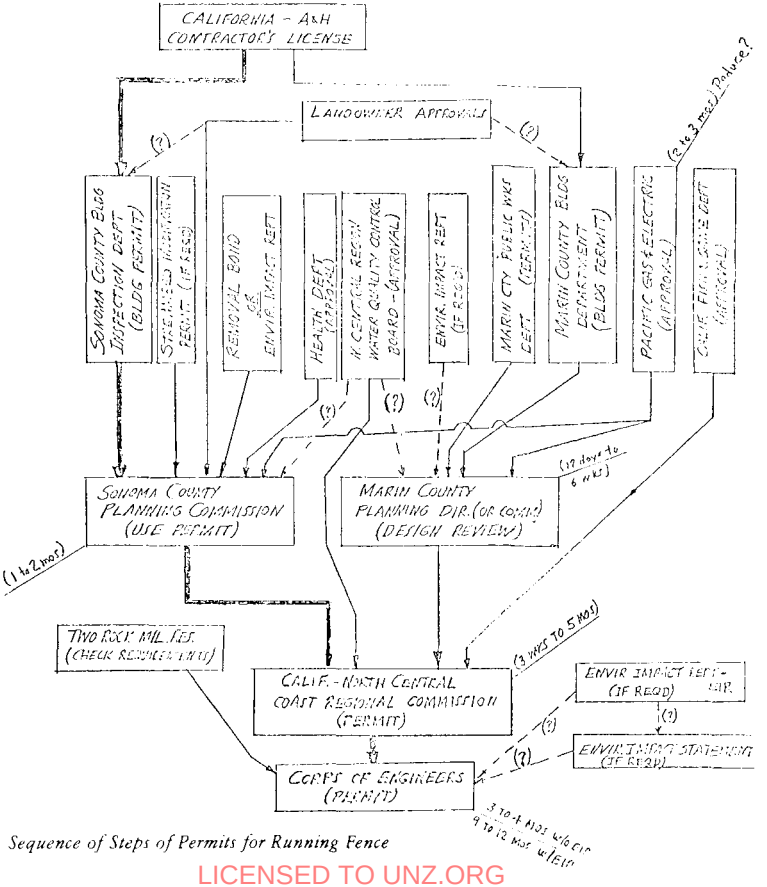
An Artist: I'm sorry but I cannot call this art. What I see in this curtain business, and from the Bible and from my knowledge in history, it's all a forerunner for land developers. It takes me back to the early thirties in Paris, the Café de Dome, which as a meeting place for artists became the flea market for all sorts of opportunists, camp-followers, and barnacles on the honest artists. Besides that, I talk six languages and care for the United States.

Farmer's Wife: We raise potatoes and I don't think this fence is going to bother any of this.

Opposition: I'm not discussing art. I'm talking about public hazard, the litter and mobs. Every road will be jammed and when you get mobs and traffic jams, people become anonymous and dangerous, they don't care about public property, and they'll break down fences—it will be like a rock festival.

Opposition: You're going to have a lot of people in all those little narrow roads. I think a million dollars is just a perfectly ridiculous endemnity bond; ten million might be all right, twenty-five million would be better.

Rancher's Wife: You objected to the traffic. If you were going to turn it down just because of the traffic, you would have to abolish the wrist-wrestling, the fairs, Mother's Day and Easter . . . because there's a lot of traffic in Sonoma County on those days, particularly Easter and Mother's Day.


CALIFORNIA - A&H CONTRACTOR'S LICENSE
LANDOWNER APPROVALS
SONOMA COUNTY BLDG INSPECTION DEPT (BLDG PERMIT)
STREAMBED ALTERATION PERMIT (IF REQ'D)
REMOVAL BOND & ENVIR IMPACT REPT
HEALTH DEPT (APPROVAL)
N CENTRAL REGION WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD - (APPROVAL)
ENVIR IMPACT REPT (IF REQ'D)
MARIN CITY PUBLIC WKS DEPT (PERMIT)
MARIN COUNTY BLDG DEPARTMENT (BLDG PERMIT)
PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC (APPROVAL)
STATE FISH & GAME DEPT (APPROVAL)
SONOMA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION (USE PERMIT)
MARIN COUNTY PLANNING DIR. (OR COMM.) (DESIGN REVIEW)
(1 to 2 mos)
TWO ROCK MIL. RES. (CHECK REQUIREMENTS)
CALIF. - NORTH CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL COMMISSION (PERMIT)
(3 MOS TO 5 MOS)
ENVIR IMPACT REPT - (IF REQ'D)
ENVIRONMENT STATEMENT (IF REQ'D)
CORPS OF ENGINEERS (PERMIT)
3 TO 4 MOS w/o EIR
9 TO 12 MOS w/EIR

Sequence of Steps of Permits for Running Fence

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Housewife: One of the things that really surprised me at the time was so many statements prefaced by "maybe" and "what if." I wonder if the Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County would ever get anything done if every morning they got up and went to their cars and said "Oh, I wonder if I'll get to work today. I wonder if there'll be an accident. . . ." If you're going to be afraid of everything because of what might happen, nothing will happen.

Peace & Freedom Party Representative: We should support Sonoma County artists. There are a lot of famous, near-famous and just very good artists here in Sonoma County. Why should someone from the outside come in and show us how it's done. . . . This has very little cultural value for the residents of this county I think. Our style is more rural, less flamboyant than this kind of thing. The whole project . . . seems more like an elegant hustle than a really great art event.

The Opposition: We feel it would constitute a public nuisance. It would be creating an annoying, unpleasant and obnoxious experience for the people who must try to do their business in the area of the proposed project. It certainly would be an annoying, unpleasant and obnoxious experience for *me* to have to look at and live with this alleged art work.

Sculptor: An artist is not the same thing as a corporation. I for one hope the days are over when a length of rope in an empty gallery or a piece of Detroit reject fabric temporarily defacing a landscape will make art critics rave and tell the innocent public they are 'far out.'

Rancher's Wife: There was one criticism about the art being "temporal." My husband is a farmer and I am a housewife. Some of the meals I prepare aren't much. But sometimes I go to a lot of work to prepare a meal that I think is "art." It's a masterpiece. And what happens to it? It gets eaten up and disappears!

Rancher's Wife: As for the people who feel that a million dollars should be spent on welfare in this area instead of for the fence, how many of them realize that when money is earmarked for a certain project it is spent for that project? It is not given away if the project is abandoned. If this project is abandoned here, Christo will spend the money somewhere else. It will not go to welfare for that is not his dream.

Rancher: I feel it's just obviously fraudulent. It isn't art. A curtain 10 feet long and 18 feet high is not art; it's not art if it's 24 *miles* long.

Sheeprancher: I don't know nothing about art. I think that if anyone wants to come into our county and dump a million dollars, I'm for it. I've been talking with an awful lot of ranchers and I haven't found one rancher against it. They're all being compensated for putting this thing up; they're getting the material, *plus* compensation. I can't see taking that away from the ranchers.

Rancher: I am a property owner up in north Marin County, and I'm third generation myself and I can't wait for Christo to come and go so I can use his pipes and cable. I have a sheep and dairy operation and you know how the price of posts are today. I think when it's all over with, you'll agree with me; you'll be glad they came to Marin County.

Christo: There are many reasons why I chose California. California is one of the American states *par excellence* where the rural, urban and suburban, all conflicting, so profoundly show so much our twentieth century feeling.

—F.B.H. and A.A.

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Representatives of the opposition at the Public Hearing

Residents of Sonoma and Marin Counties whose property is crossed by Running Fence

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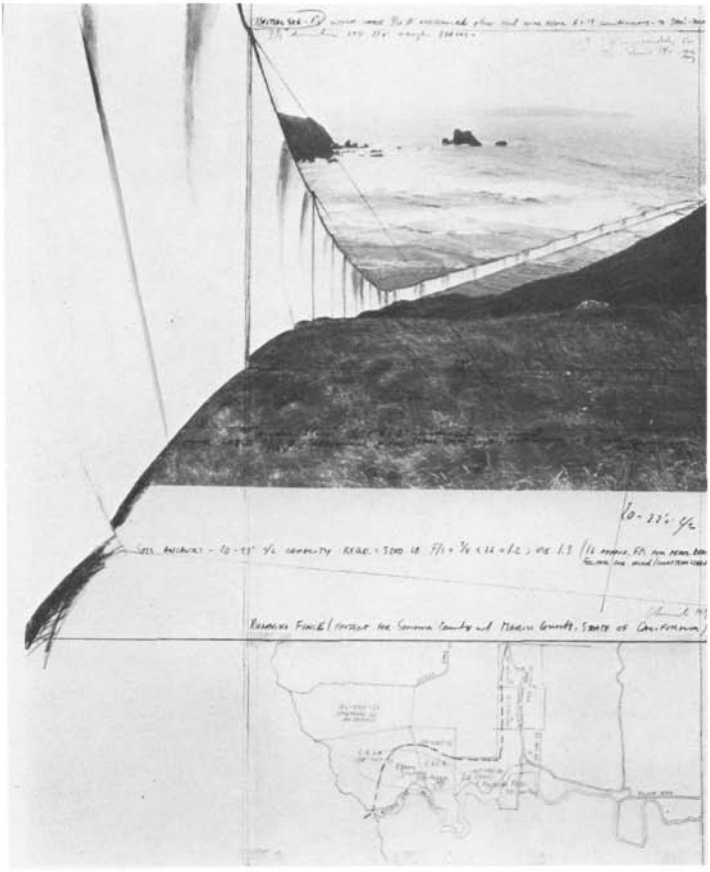

Collage of Running Fence

All photographs in the Christo Portfolio by Gianfranco Gorgoni

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The Friendly Way (Continued)

Joe Brainard

''IT ALL STARTED ONE AFTERNOON WHEN I WAS LOOKING AROUND FOR SOMETHING UNUSUAL TO WEAR ON MY HEAD.''

''EVIDENTLY THE USE OF SEA SHELLS IS AS VARIED AS YOU CARE TO MAKE IT.''

''NOW WE ARE IN AUTUMN, AND THE LEAVES ARE FALLING. WE WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE SPRING INSTEAD, WITH ITS BRIGHTER DAYS, OF COURSE, BUT THE CHOICE IS NOT OURS.''

''IN THE RENAUD'S LIVING-ROOM, WITH ITS BRIGHT RED AND GREEN FLORAL PATTERNS ON WHITE WROUGHT IRON FURNITURE, WHICH OVERLOOKS THE GRAND RIVER, SHE HAS A SIGN HANGING ON THE WALL READING '*THINK CHRISTMAS.*'''

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"I WORK ON THE THEORY THAT IF YOU HAVE MATERIALS, YOU MAY AS WELL USE THEM."

"IT'S LIKE I TELL THOSE WHO ARE AFRAID TO TRY PAPIER-MÂCHÉ—IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, SO WHAT?"

"MY HUSBAND WORKS IN A GLASS BOTTLE FACTORY. HE MAKES MOSTLY BEER BOTTLES. IT SEEMS THERE'S A GREAT DEMAND FOR THEM."

"I ALWAYS ENJOY STICKING LITTLE NOTES INTO CARDS, EVEN IF I DON'T KNOW THE PERSON."

"RIGHT NOW I HAVE OVER FIFTY LETTERS FROM WOULD-BE TURKISH PEN PALS. HOWEVER, THEY ARE WRITTEN IN TURKISH, AND SO IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO ANSWER THEM."

"ALTHO DEE ARRANGES FLOWERS MOSTLY FOR SHOWS AND WEDDINGS, SHE PLANS TO GET INTO FUNERALS SOON."

"I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT PEOPLE DO WITHOUT CATS."

"I HOPE THAT LADIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LIBRARY FACILITIES."

"A NEW WAVE OF CHAIN LETTERS IS APPARENTLY MOVING ACROSS THE COUNTRY."

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''ONCE IN A WHILE THE MOOD STRIKES, AND I SEW UP EVERY PIECE OF MATERIAL IN THE HOUSE.''

''WITH THE COOLER WEATHER APPROACHING, I FIND I CARE LESS FOR THE ICED DRINKS OF SUMMER.''

''I'M THE MOTHER OF FIVE AND THE WIFE OF A MAN WHO CLAIMS HE'S ALWAYS OUT OF SOCKS AND CAN NEVER FIND HIS CRESCENT WRENCH. HIS SOCKS ARE ALWAYS IN THE DRESSER DRAWER, BUT I HID HIS WRENCH: A PLUMBER SUGGESTED I SHOULD.''

''WE AREN'T WORRIED ABOUT TORNADOES, BLIZZARDS, HURRICANES, OR TIDAL WAVES, BUT WE DO HAVE RATTLESNAKES, SCORPIONS, AND SONIC BOOMS FROM THE PLANES AT EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE THAT SHAKE THE FILLINGS OUT OF YOUR TEETH—SO I GUESS WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.''

''WITH A LITTLE 'VISION' YOU TOO CAN CONVERT T.V. DINNER TRAYS INTO CLEVER BOUTIQUE ORGANIZERS.''

''MAKING EXOTIC MINI-PEDESTALS FOR MINIATURE CHRISTMAS SYMBOLS IS SO FASCINATING THERE IS NO WAY TO STOP.''

''WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF WILLOWS IN THIS AREA MY THOUGHTS HAVE CENTERED ON BASKETS.''

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''I REMEMBER THE INDIANS WOULD SOMETIMES COME IN OUR HOME TO GET WARM AND THEN GO ON THEIR WAY. ONE DAY GRANDMA HAD SOME LOAVES OF BREAD ON THE OVEN DOOR TO RAISE, A BIG INDIAN WALKED IN AND STUCK HIS FINGER IN EACH LOAF!''

''PERHAPS I SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT MIKE GOT THE URGE TO DANCE A FEW YEARS AGO AND HAS BEEN GOING STRONG EVER SINCE.''

''NEEDLEWORK, LIKE LIFE, IS JUST A MATTER OF GOING IN AND OUT WITH A STRAND OF WOOL.''

''OCCASIONALLY A BEER BOTTLE IS TOSSED INTO MY YARD, AND SOME OF THEM ARE *BEAUTIFUL!*''

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Stuart Dybek

SUNDAY AT THE ZOO

We decided to stop drinking and spend Sunday at the zoo. It was going nicely until she worked herself up over the observation that it was a horrible thing to cage the animals.

"*That's* not very profound," I said, "everybody who goes to the zoo feels that sometime."

"Oh, you cruel bastard," she screamed, "I'm not *everybody*!"

She bellied over the guard rail and flung herself against the bars of the wolves' cage.

Three wolves had been circling and as soon as she touched the bars they froze, fur bristling along their spines.

She had her arms stuck in between the bars up to her shoulders and as much of her face as she could wedge in yelling, "Eat me! Eat me!" to the wolves.

Just that week the newspapers had carried an account of how a small girl had an arm gnawed off—she'd reached in to pet them and one wolf held it while the other ate. It was, in fact, what had led us, along with the crowd, relentlessly to the wolves' cage.

But the wolves held their ground, snarling, stiff-legged.

An attendant came running down the aisle between the fence and cages and grabbed her by the hair and throat, wrestling her back. She locked her arms around the bars and he kept slapping her face with a thick, purplish slab of meat he must have been feeding to one of the animals.

"I'll give you "'Eat me, Eat me,'" he grinned, kicking her down and grabbing his crotch.

At that instant all three wolves rushed against the bars so that they shook, and you could hear their teeth breaking on the metal. Their bloodied snouts jabbed through, snapping at air.

"Stop abusing that woman," I shouted from the crowd.

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Two Poems by Dean Faulwell

VALENTINE

Gutters are swept clean
by the smiles
of evening sharks.
Strong and numerous,
they swim in one direction,
honing their teeth
on the current
that is always against them.
They are trying
to reach your house,
urged on by instinct
and by their dream
of one day
lying next to you
on a couch
of red velvet.

ROMANCE

Now he is embarrassed even to ask her for a cigarette. His mother would not have refused him, but his mother doesn't smoke. Neither does he. It was only a pretext. We shall never know whether or not it would have succeeded in bringing them together.

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Barry Yourgrau

FEMMES FATALES NO. 1

I have the last pack of cigarettes in the world; but no matches. I am in the bedroom, which has an enormous window, so I have to keep my body between the cigarettes and the window. Everybody is in the other room with the matches. I try to think of some disguised way of asking for matches without giving away my secret.

I can't think of any. I go out into the other room, hang around for a while in a state of desperate appetite, then sneak downstairs and open the broom closet, releasing the bull. I rush back upstairs and tell everybody that the bull is loose!

They all go downstairs, except for one blonde. To keep her ignorant of my real interests, I seduce her. She tells me she is so glad someone is finally seducing her, because she has just been fired from her job. After we have necked a bit, I suggest she go to the bathroom and prepare herself. She goes off coquettishly, saying she will tell me later all about why she *really* lost her job.

Immediately I rifle through the handbags that are lying around, find some matches and run into my room. But before I can light up I hear her coming out of the bathroom. I hide the matches and cigarettes. We start to fuck. I am unhappy, as I feel myself coming I moan "No! No!" because I don't want to come, I want to smoke.

Suddenly there is cigarette smoke streaming from her mouth and her fingernails are on fire. I snap into a terrific ecstasy.

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Linda Gregg

SIGISMUNDO

The fête confused me. Guests played the part of gods.
There was a woman with white skin who stood
with her pale green robe open all night throwing roses.
A lady caught me in the only quiet room and demanded
I take her to him. I refused even when she begged.
And went down by the sea and thought of something else.
Sun broke that morning on the torches.
Cool air over the tepid sea. Sigismundo the Beautiful.
Out for himself. A dove-torturer. A killer of cities.
Killer of wife before breakfast. Sigismundo,
who built a church to a woman who was not beautiful,
with roses cut in the stone.
Whose dream was to resurrect the goddesses.
All through my boyhood I was told I'd walk hand in hand
with death. I chose Dante over Christ.
Climbed mountains for the view and cried
when I saw how they marred the statues.
But there is nothing, nothing to say about my life.
Unmerciful Sigismundo did many wrongs and his people
loved him
and he will live forever. I who go down like Persephone
with my accomplishments of silence and weeping unrecorded,
even I if I were a girl would answer Yes, I know how to swim,
for a chance to drown in that blue water of his. Sigismundo.

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Vickie Karp

A THREE WEEKS LOVE POEM

for Tsvi Dym

I can see the hooked noses of the owls
And this is how it always begins. In
The darkness, everything looking

Like a handle and slowly I begin to reach,
Laughing like the mother blowing up,
A staircase of breaths.

Every night with my lids folded up,
Knowing this is what I really wanted with
The important doors and ridiculous windows.

The things I have no right to remember
Fall off their nails and never hit the ground.
The furniture softens and I belong everywhere

And even inside myself. This is beginning
To be the way you leave me. Comic and tragic,
Susceptible to anything that shines.

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Joan Larkin

SELF-PITY

It clings like a sheath-dress,
this synthetic softness
all of us wear in the office.

It's like my garter-belt;
it prints my skin with a map
of pain so familiar
I do not know I feel it.

Like the stocking-tops that press
my upper thighs out
and against each other,
it's the knife of standard beauty.
Going anywhere chafes me.

Am I ready to tear it off?
I was taught that power was not
to be mine without it:
the silk of manipulation.

And I have taken such pleasure in it.
It is my intimate—
necessary and daily as the taste of salt.

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Two Poems by W. I. Scobie

BAT

Beautiful little bitch
with your fine bones,
thin and sweet ears,
cusped teeth for crunching,
delicate breastbone-keel,
backbone a firm fulcrum for
happy erratic wings,
and the useful skin bag
between the thighs: go
wrap yourself up in your arms,
hang by your toes and sleep.

No one hears our cries, either.

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ON VENICE BEACH

1

Now my hair's down to my shoulders
all the black queens of Venice, Cal.,
ask me: 'Man, where can I score some
reds?
whites!
hash!!
acid!!!
DOPE!!!!

I think I'm gonna start mainlining peanut butter
and self-destruct in thirty seconds from now.

2

I bought a rat for a dime.
The kid said: 'Otherwise
my gran says, I gotta kill it!'
It's called Absalom
because I like long hair.

I never saw anything so scared.
It shits every time you touch it.
It eats lettuce and fresh green peas.
It sits on my chest,
twitching its tender whiskers.
I impute to it no evil.
I am St. Francis of Disneyland.

It's wrong to love things too much.

As Tony says:
'You're such a Mother.'

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3

All my senses ping like sonar:
Miss Mescaline, you've fused me again
you're so remorseless,
I'm ready for anything.

I could almost kill even
whoever this is beside me
whom I lie, on one arm, watching,
asleep.
Let me stop shivering
take your tongue out of my ass
your head out of my head.
Let me start caring again.

4

After the nightly sex
I lie awake listening
to the sad fading honk
of the Venice pier siren
saying softly,
FOG.

It's like something breathing
its last. God, it's a lonely sound.
Pacific fog is blowing in.
It has the house surrounded.

A patch of it has entered my heart
And I'm too scared to tell you.

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Eric Overmyer

I DON'T EAT TUNA ANYMORE

arching out of the flat black sheen
of coffee table,
the six inch crystal dolphin:
seven hundred dollars.
as advertised in *The Times*
roc & phoenix
are a little more.
soon we shall have to depend
on these Steuben Glass figurines,
on museum taxidermists, ski lodge
mantels, Audobon paintings,
& indexed copies of *The Geographic*
for our wildlife.

for reasons still unknown
the dolphin & tuna run together.
in ten years, the tuna will be gone
the fleet hunched in drydock, folded
like old deck chairs, & school lunches different.
only Russia & Japan still whale.
I note carefully the technology
of conservation continues to improve:
the simulated sonic screams
of killer whales may be used
to drive the dolphins out of the giant nets
where now, not comprehending the machinations
of man, they drown in thousands,
their heavy shining bodies
raining on decks.
this may save them,
& the tuna fleet as well, for the dolphins are used

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to spot the fish. This recording,
first used to drive grey whales from San Diego,
causes "predatory" Belugas to flee against the tide
from Alaska river mouths where they feed
on spawning salmon & deplete the fisheries.
I also note
the government trains sea lions
to locate & recover torpedoes,
which may prove useful in a war.

when I walk in the green flower
of the forest, safe in its way,
I am no longer at peace.
in the back of my mind is a spring of sadness
which would drown me if I let it.
my ancient eyes see what was,
my blood cries for what is lost.

O what it must have been,
O what a garden

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Shooting the Rest Area

Richard Ford

In the dark Edgar Haney walked from his truck and turned up the sidewalk to the cafe. It was an hour before light, and he shuddered inside his coat as the cold touched his flesh. And this is the thing that came to him. That in 1937, they had a black Mercury and his father had a heart attack and couldn't call on his jobbers. So his mother drove. And in that black hot summer they had gone into Louisiana and spent a July day across the river in Vidalia, the first day. And when they worked as far as Villeplatte the Mercury broke down, and they stayed in a hotel that had ceiling fans and dragon flies in the rooms. He remembered walking out of the hotel into the still street at noon and going with his father up to the agency building, and a woman behind the cashier's in a beaded dress and red lips and short hair, and back to the room holding his father's hand. The ceiling fan had covered over with grease that came out of the air, and over that a coating of fluffy dust, like a sycamore leaf. The whole time, the nine days they were in Villeplatte, he was afraid of the dragon flies and believed they would sting him.

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He moved across in front of the cafe, in the lights, and felt no warmer there than in the dark.

Inside, Adolf Smith did not greet him, but ordered him breakfast and began.

"There's a bunch, now, that Buck's carrying in from Memphis," he said softly. "And then two bone sawyers from St. Louis are driving over from Little Rock. I want you to take them."

Edgar sat still in his chair, feeling the warm air close in around him.

"Now Buck said he saw a bunch of does jump that bar ditch. If you get back out before it's good light, shoot you one and dress it out right there, and don't tell nobody."

Edgar sliced the round of ham into bits and cut the egg yolks, letting them drain into the meat.

"Now did you look over there in the big reservoir like I told you to?" Adolf said, staring at him.

Edgar raised his head, avoiding Adolf's eyes.

"I went over that little bridge you built, Tuesday. And there wasn't no ducks in there."

"They're in that rest area then, sure as shittin. You know, straight back behind where you got that horse shoe stob there by your house?"

He nodded. A drop of perspiration inched down his temple.

"Go back through *there* this morning. Walk that little levee and take your doctors across in the boat. Hadn't been anybody in there."

Four men in chest-waders and heavy jackets rose from the table beside them and walked to the cash register. They dropped their pennies on the glass counter.

Adolf leaned forward on the table top.

"Has Mr. Covington been down to check on you?" he said, his voice now lower than before.

Edgar put his coffee down and ran his tongue over the roof of his mouth. "He'll come by there a couple of times a week,"

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he said considerately. "I see his green truck down where you go in at gate 1. I think he thinks he'll catch Buck down there with over the limit one of these times and arrest him. I go by there to the house, and he'll be sitting there in his truck slumped over sleeping."

"Now Covington stays drunked up, I'll guarantee you that," Adolf said.

"I think he just sleeps," Edgar said, looking past Adolf at the huge square heater box that was forcing the same over-heated air back into the cafe.

"You better go on. One bunch go ahead of the other. I don't want you shooting one another on my land."

In the truck he began to think about Thibodaux where there had been a man named Gallitois who owned a wholesale house for food. And his mother parked the Mercury in the sun while his father walked up on the loading platform, his back bent, and into the man's office to sell a boxcar of starch. In the car he sat with his mother and watched the tractor trailers pull away from the high dock in the heat. The seat covers were blue and white and felt and smelled like old straw. She opened all the windows and there was no cool breeze, except for the sweet smell of feed riding the hot air out of the warehouse, and over the tiny bleached seashells that covered the lot like gravel, so that everything was white. His mother drew a pencil diagram of where the gears were on the steering column, and there, while they were suffocating, he learned to drive.

Covington was a man who'd gone away and come back, but come back long before now, when he was a lot younger. They told a story that when he first came back from living in Los Angeles he came back a soak, drinking a gallon of red wine every day, from the cardboard cases he brought with him in a U-Haul and stored in the cyclone cellar of his house. He had a friend named Sales O. Neal who lived in town, and he and Covington would get in Covington's house in the afternoons and drink up the wine and stay drunk for days at a time, never coming out of the house for anything.

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Except for the one time when they drove in Covington's old green truck outside of town and sneaked into Tindall Matthews' pond. And when they got all ready to fish Covington found he couldn't hold onto his worm and swung around with his pole and hooked Sales in the throat with a #3 bass hook. And when Sales fell over gasping, Covington thought he was having some kind of seizure and got on top of him and held him down, giving him artificial respiration by the Holger Nielsen Method while Sales suffocated out through the gap in his windpipe. Tindall Matthews said that when he came down there late in the afternoon Covington was still trying to stretch Sales' elbows forward in spite of rigor mortis having already begun. And he said that Covington just got mad at Sales when he found out he was dead. But after that Covington poured out all the wine, went to Little Rock for a year, and came back a game warden.

Edgar passed the turn-off at number 1. He slowed and looked long through his closed window into the dimness, into and partly through the scraggly weeds. But he could not see the shine of car metal or the color green or the outline of a man sleeping.

In the summer they were in Lake Charles, and in the lobby of the Bently Hotel his mother took him to the duck pond and told him that in 1923 General Pershing came and gave a speech standing on the gold mosaic border of the pond, with men teeming in the lobby, smoking cigars. And in the street troopers from Camp Polk formed up in their lines to listen and be led by him back down the highway to the camp limits. The general spoke for a long time, his words being carried outside by loud speakers, and when he walked out under the porte cochère to take command, the men were mostly passed out from the heat, and some were sitting on the hot macadam crying because they had let him down and because they were homesick.

The truck bounced like a box of pots and pans across the low-log bridge over Lagrue Creek a mile from his house.

He stopped past the bridge and shut it off, and walked out

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on the wet ground beside the slough, shivering in the cold, and stood still. And after a time of standing, there was a moment, by himself, when he heard everything, all the cracked and breaking sounds that the ice makes in the limbs, and the sound of the wind that he couldn't feel blowing, and the sound of something alive in the leaves on the ground that he couldn't see, and the sound that the truck made behind him, ticking inside the motor, settling.

And in that moment far up the slough, where it wasn't even a slough but a shallow lake in the woods, he could hear the sound of the ducks conniving like a thousand ragged women, hidden far back, moiling the black water and scudding over the top of it so that it churned under them and tossed them like boats. And he could see their fragile white pin feathers floating in the slough at the bridge where he was, softly through trees without a sound.

He snapped the cigarette off his fingers, skimming off against the logs and losing its fire.

The house sat frozen in the dark, backed by the woods. A smallish low house hunkering unlighted in the half-circle of plowed fields that bordered the road along its circumference line and swung back toward the woods and Lagrue Creek for 80 yards.

Edgar pulled the truck behind the house and his headlamps shown on the horse-shoe stob and on the first frozen lespedeza stalks of the field.

Standing in the chilled air he heard the ducks quarreling in the trees where he couldn't see, but where he could hear them, sounding nearer now, more throaty and strident than before, more severe, like an old man with the grippe.

On the seawall at New Orleans there was a picture that his father took of him sitting with his mother on the white concrete wall, with the Gulf of Mexico behind them. And when the picture was taken his father came up, and they all sat on the wall facing the water and ate pralines. He had worn

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brown tennis shoes and when he began to take them off to wade in the ocean, one of them fell in the water and went out of sight immediately. And his mother got him and held him so tight he thought he would stop breathing.

In the kitchen he lit the oven and set water on the gas ring, and stood rinsing mugs under the cold tap and setting them in a line on the counter, each with a spoon in it. And he then sat for a while, at the white table, beneath the hanging bulb.

In the first season for deer in October, when sometimes by noon it was 85 degrees after the early morning when it had been just above freezing, men would drive from all over, even from Dallas, Texas, to shoot them. And you'd see those Lincoln Continentals, with Texas tags and silver six-shooters for hood ornaments, running down Highway 67 each with a big buck stretched across the front with its tongue sticking out the side of its mouth. And when they got to the state line at Texarkana the highway police had put up a wood barricade. And off beside it on the side of the road there was a big stack of de-antlered deer carcasses, all stretched out in that sun. Some of the men had come a long way with their deer, some from near Memphis, and the heat of their big cars mixed with the heat of the growing day had turned their deer bad, and there was a law that wouldn't let you take rancid meat across the line. And so they had to leave them there, bleeding in the suck-weeds.

In November, when he came from Kansas, Covington told him that Buck was bad off drinking. That 10 years ago Adolf Smith had got hold of the land and gnawed every tree of it with his own teeth and got it set up to be a farm and moved himself to Little Rock into a good hotel and fallen in love with the lady who owned the hotel and ten more like it in Memphis and Kansas City and Austin, Texas, and whose husband had drowned at Hot Springs in 1948. And before long he had married her and moved up to her suite on the eleventh floor, eating baskets of fruit and running the bell boys up and down the elevator, and carrying all his friends and hers too, out to the farm to hunt ducks and everything else there was out there.

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And getting mad and raising hell with everybody because they drove too fast on his gravel road that he'd graded himself, and raising hell when Ruthie's friends killed Suzies instead of Greenheads, and refusing to let the wrecker use his road when Ruthie's friends drove off in the bar ditch, and running her friends and his too off the property when he caught them hunting without his being there, and carrying his old steel-grey Sweet 16 laid across the back seat of his car as a convincer.

And Covington told him that it didn't seem like but a minute went by that Ruthie had him divorced and herself married to a little Polock named Worzibock who was 15 years younger than she was and who wore his suits with no cuffs, and who Adolf took out to the farm *two* times before it all happened to him, and Worzibock was just a little interior decorator hired to redo Ruthie's hotels.

After that Adolf moved out of the hotel and back to Hazen where he had his rooms and could go to the farm when he wanted to and drive his old road grader along the side of the bar ditch and run off the country people that sneaked in to fish in his big reservoir.

And Covington said he thought Adolf used the farm to get back at Ruthie, by not inviting anybody she ever knew or that he ever knew when he knew her to hunt, and by paying old Buck, who was hard on his luck and drinking, to carry people from out of town in there for a hundred dollars a duck season, without their having to even buy a government stamp.

Covington said Buck was only good now from 4 AM to noon, and after that he got off in his little house and drank whiskey all day and half the night.

Edgar got up and lit the fire under the water pot. He closed the oven door and got a jar of powdered coffee out of the empty cabinet and set it in front of the line of mugs.

He stood then at the door, looked out through the glass and snapped on the flood light. His pick-up sat in the yard, its windows clouded and a layer of soft dew rising on the hood. He looked beyond the perimeter of the light toward the

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woods, but he could not see the trees.

He remembered that on Peter's Island on the Arkansas River, old man Jim Tipton had been 83 years old and ten years too stove-up to walk out of the dirt yard in front of the old hunting house he had built up on stilts against the flood. And still every morning when the men were all there he came down off the porch an hour before the first light, when the men were putting their guns in the trunks, and stood in the flood-lit dirt waving his old teak-wood cane and telling the Mexicans driving the trucks where to put this man and that, and threatening everybody who could hear him against shooting his wild turkeys that he protected, and against shooting the quail that were out of season, and against every other possible infraction that would violate his sense about what was just and right to do in the woods.

A pair of lights swung out across the field from the road, and Edgar listened for the mutterings of the engine, standing grey-faced behind the glass.

But when he was 85 the old man seemed to take a turn, and while he couldn't get around any better and probably could get around worse, he said he felt better and said he thought he had a lot of time left in the world, and within a month of saying it, got married to a widow from West Memphis who was 53 years old and who had served with him for 19 years on the state dog racing commission.

Edgar stood inside while the car rolled clumsily into the yard, pitching and swaying over the uneven ground.

And he waited until the inside lights blinked and the motor was quiet before he opened the door.

"Where's Buck," the man inside bellowed, his head momentarily gone below the window level.

Edgar unlatched the screen, keeping hold of the cold latch nail.

The man who appeared around the car was 60 years old, fat and short and wearing heavy chest waders that interfered with his movement and forced him to drag his feet splayed and stiff-kneed in the grass. A thick strand of white hair had come

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loose from the rest and fallen across the man's right temple, covering his eye and causing him to screw that side of his face into a blind squint.

The man jabbed out his hand, and in that motion clutched a paper sack up under his left arm.

"I'm Armstrong," he said. "Where's old Buck. Buck, you shit ass, come out here. I brought you a present!"

Armstrong paused on the steps and looked grinning out towards both corners of the house which were outside the dominion of the flood light and nearly hidden in the shadows.

Inside he set the sack down on the table, and smoothed his thick fingers through his hair, still grinning and gaping all around the room as if someone was hiding from him and planning at any moment to burst out and wrestle with him.

"What's your name, son?" Armstrong said loudly, still turning round in the room.

"Edgar Haney," he said softly, turning toward the hot stove.

"Listen here, is old Buck still bringing them in?" Armstrong said, groping in his crotch while he let himself down on the chair.

"He'll be out here," Edgar said.

"He's a pistol," Armstrong said. "You know it?"

It would infuriate old man Tipton's young wife, whose name was Mary Elizabeth, that he would go down to Peter's Island and stay for a month at a time, even though he told her that she could go down with him and be the first woman to get asked on the island since his family had owned it, and direct the cooking.

And at first she said she'd never go down there. But then after they'd been married for two years and Mr. Jim was getting around worse and worse and sometimes getting down there and forgetting where he was and who all the people were, she relented and came down with him for the first season in October. She had actually tried to get him not to go down at all, but his son, Louis Guy, wouldn't have that and said he'd take his father down to the island on a portable death bed if it

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came to that, since things wouldn't be the same without the old man there to give everybody instructions and wave his cane.

So she went. And stayed a week and a half, and acted like she enjoyed herself, taking long walks in the woods in the afternoons when the men were in for the day, since Mr. Jim wouldn't allow hunting after lunch.

And after a week and a half she went home, leaving the old man down there, bald-headed and stumbling around in the yard. He told them all what a sport she was and how next year maybe there could be women, if they all acted like Mary Elizabeth. And he seemed to feel better after that, and stayed down there until after Christmas.

Edgar set the mug on the table with a plastic sugar bowl and a carton of milk, the spoon still standing up over the top.

"Are you a Hazen boy?" Armstrong said, grinding the sugar in the bottom of his mug.

"I was." Edgar said.

Armstrong looked up at him.

"I was in Wichita eleven years," Edgar said, and rested back up against the front of the stove.

"The hell you were," Armstrong said.

"My wife's still there."

"You're legally separated from her then?" Armstrong said, catching him with his small blue eyes.

"No I'm not. I'm just working down here for a while." He felt for the warm knobs behind him.

"You just come to visit, then?" Armstrong said, smiling.

"She might come down here except this house don't heat good."

Armstrong tipped back in his chair, drawing the waders smooth over his belly.

"Well, I'll tell you something. If I ever get where I can set enough money by to live on like I want to, I'm moving straight back to the farm," Armstrong said.

Edgar looked at him in the eyes for the first time.

"I'm a farm person," Armstrong said. "Raised in LaFarge,

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Illinois, out of Joliet. Two miles from the arsenal and one mile from the prison. They got a big Army arsenal at Joliet."

Edgar nodded, holding the stove knobs and continuing to stare at him.

"My dad farmed so I could go to medical college. And I want to tell you son, I've been right down there in all the shit just like you have. And I hadn't forgotten the taste of pig shit either."

Edgar looked away.

Except when the old man got home Mary Elizabeth had started proceedings to have him declared incompetent, and at the same time made a contract with a lumber company in Memphis to come and cut the first growth timber off the island to sell to a pulp mill in Camden.

Louis Guy, of course, tried to have everything stopped, except that he didn't have any legal interest, and it was true that Mr. Jim was as incompetent as he could be, so everything Louis Guy tried to do didn't help.

Mary Elizabeth acted like nothing was the matter, fixing lunch for Mr. Jim every day and bringing it to his room where he had begun to stay since he found out everything that was happening to him.

Until one day, two days after the incompetency hearing where the old man had been declared unable to take care of his own business, and Mary Elizabeth had been appointed his executrix, she came in with his tray and he wasn't there.

"What do you do back here, farm?" Armstrong said. "I noticed you got the ground torn up."

"Mr. Smith had that harrowed to keep ducks out," Edgar said. "He had his beans in there last year, and ducks eat beans if you let them do it."

Edgar stood at the door looking out, seeing the sky turning pale grey, and the imprint of the trees against it.

"You and Buck kill enough to live on?" Armstrong looked at his back, snuffing air through his huge round nostrils. "I know old Buck don't take much solid food, does he?"

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"I couldn't tell you," Edgar said. "Quick as you finish your coffee we'll get your stuff out of the trunk."

He snapped the flood light off and on again.

"Buck still got that freezer on his back porch?" Armstrong said, tipping back again in his chair, easing the folds in his waders.

"I don't know," Edgar said.

"I know he used to keep a great big old steel bar stuck through the handle," Armstrong said. "Great big old Yale padlock hung on it. I walked out there one day about ten o'clock and said, 'Son, what have you got in this thing,' cause you know he's not married. And he said, 'Oh Dr. Armstrong I just got some Hershey bars in there.'"

Armstrong's mouth twisted into a huge, gaping grin, and the twig of white hair fell across his eye again.

"So I said, 'Let's take a look.' And I think he must've thought I was the game warden, because his face got pale as this table. And he opened that thing up and it was full up to the top with deer steaks. And I said, 'why Buck, what're you doing with all this venison?' And he said, you know how he talks: 'Oh Dr. Armstrong I keep all that in there in case I get sick and can't do for myself.'

"And he got this grin on his old red face big as a split. So Haines, what I want to say to *you* is that you take care of yourself. If you two were to get laid up very long at the same time, there wouldn't be any deer left in the whole damn state."

Armstrong burst out laughing, snuffing up air through his nose.

And Edgar remembered that Mary Elizabeth got the yard man to get the car, and the two of them drove off down the river from town to the island.

The yardman, whose name was T.V.A. Landrieu, said you could see the smoke 15 miles away, grey and sweet-smelling. And when they tried to get over to it they found that the wood bridge had been the first to burn and was just hanging there by cinders and chars.

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The island burned for three days, and burned up, houses and everything.

On the second day they got over to it, and got Mr. Jim and the Mexicans off, although it was too late to save anything.

In Biloxi he and his mother had gone to the Edgewater Beach and stayed a week across the highway from the Gulf while his father worked in town selling starch. And the hotel had wide galleries in the front and painted-white wicker chairs and red tile and deep blotches of green shade. On the first day they went across to the beach and swam where the water was coffee colored and muddy to where it was over his head. And afterwards they fished for crabs with nets and slices of salted pork rind off the Edgewater pier until it was dark. And that night he swam in the lighted salt-water pool and went to bed itching. And in the morning there were 11 fat boils on his chest and his face and on the upper part of his legs so that his mother refused to let him leave the tiny airless room for a week, until the boils were gone and by then they had gone to Hattiesburg.

Armstrong went out into the door-yard ahead of him, dragging his feet through the frozen grass.

Another pair of lights swung across the field from the road.

"Which one is he going to let us shoot?" Armstrong said, leaning over into the trunk of his car, his mouth puffing clouds of steam.

"He said to take you to the rest area," Edgar said flatly, holding his shotgun on his arm and looking at the trees.

"That old shit-ass. It's about damn time." Armstrong said, and slammed the trunk lid down.

The second car's lights caught Armstrong for an instant, like a possum in the road, and he squinted and grinned into the beams.

And Edgar knew that in the summer a lot of things look different than they do, or than they had, in the first cold days of autumn. He could remember, then, their first winter in Kansas had been so bare and dry-cold that the county reservoir froze eleven feet down. And everybody who was poor then was scared and suffering. Except that in June it was

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different, and they took a day and ate chicken sandwiches by the lake in the flat bed of his black truck, and drank water out of a thermos. And the sound of the water in the thermos and the way the cork smelled and the way it tasted when he held it in his teeth had lingered all this time, eleven years, and came to him now and replaced the sour taste of coffee. And the three of them started from the yard, straight across the clod field from where the horse shoe stob had been driven into the ground, toward the printed woods.

And he remembered finally that the old man seemed to be in good spirits when they drove him back from the island, and didn't seem to be mad at Mary Elizabeth, who didn't talk to him the whole way back. Except that when they got in the house she told him she was going to get a divorce, and he said that was all right, and in about a week he died in the front yard.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FICTION

Joe Brainard (*The Friendly Way* [*Continued*]) is a painter and a writer who lives and works in Manhattan. He was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His next one-man exhibition will take place in the fall of 1975 at the Fischbach Gallery. His watercolor "Pansy" appeared on the cover of the last issue, #61, of *The Paris Review*.

Ken Brower (*Time and the Jungle*) was born in San Francisco. He has been very active in publications for Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth, and has travelled to Alaska, the Galapagos Islands, Hawaiian Islands and around the world through Micronesia. He is the author of *With Their Islands Around Them* (1974), a nonfiction book. This is his first published fiction.

France Burke (*In the Footprints of the Dinosaur*) has had several poems published recently in *Icarus* and *Humanists*, and her work is forthcoming in *Shaman* and *Poet Lore*. She lives in New York City, and has recently completed a novel.

Richard Ford (*Shooting the Rest Area*) is a lecturer in the English Department at the University of Michigan, and is a former Junior Fellow in the Society of Fellows there. He lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan and his stories have appeared in a number of magazines.

Alan Friedman (*Prelude to a Glorious Fugue*) is the author of *Hermaphrodeity* and *The Turn of the Novel*. He lives and works in Berkeley, California.

Gina Herbkersman (*Thor*) makes her living as a computer programmer and systems analyst in San Francisco. *Thor* is a chapter of a novel in progress and is her first published fiction. It was selected by *The Paris Review* as the best story from the 1974 Squaw Valley Community of Writers.

INTERVIEW

Peter Stitt (*James Wright Interview*) teaches at Middlebury College and has published poems, essays and reviews in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *Shenandoah* and others. He did *The Paris Review* Interview with John Berryman.

POETRY PORTFOLIO

James Wright was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and the Fellowship of the Academy of American Poets, "for distinguished poetic achievement" in 1972. His books of poems are *The Green Way* (1957), *Saint Judas* (1959), *The Branch Will Not Break* (1963), *Shall We Gather at the River* (1968), *Collected Poems* (1971) and *Two Citizens* (1973). He lives in New York City.

POETRY

Diane Ackerman has been published in *Chelsea*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Granite*, *Carolina Quarterly* and others. A long poem is in the current *Massachusetts*

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Review. At work on a new collection of poems about the planets, she lives in Ithaca, New York, where she is obtaining her doctorate at Cornell.

Georgia Alwan is a free-lance musician who lives in Los Angeles. This is her first publication.

Susan Bartels is a graduate assistant at the University of South Carolina, working on her Ph.D. in American Literature. A collection of her poems, *Step Carefully in Night Grass* was published in 1974. Her work has also appeared in numerous magazines, including *Southern Poetry Review* and *Four Quarters*, and was also included in an anthology of North Carolina poets.

Stuart Dybek has had both fiction and poetry published in a number of magazines, most recently in *The Iowa Review*, *Sou'wester* and *Poetry Now*. He is currently teaching writing at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo Michigan.

Dean Faulwell is a former editor of *Oink!* and has had poems in numerous small publications. He recently completed a short novel, *Forced Entry*, which is awaiting a publisher.

Linda Gregg's poems have appeared in *Antaeus*, and are forthcoming in *The New Yorker*, *The American Review* and in an anthology edited by Daniel Halpern. She lives in Marin County, California.

Tom Hansen is 33 and teaches poetry and novel courses at Northern State College in Aberdeen, South Dakota. His poems are currently appearing in *Poetry Northwest*, *Dakotah Territory* and *Ball State University Forum*.

Jonathan Holden is the author of *Design for a House*, which won the 1972 Devins Award. A new collection, *Glass*, is completed and seeks a publisher. He teaches English at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri.

Paul Hoover has been published in *New: Canadian and American Poetry* and *Chelsea*. His collection of short and one-line poems, *Hairpin Turns*, (Oink! Press) was published in 1971. He lives in Chicago.

Vickie Karp's poems have appeared in *The Harvard Crimson* and *The Iowa Review*. She lives in New York, where she recently completed her B.A. and was editor of *Whereas*.

Naomi Lazard has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The American Review*, *The Nation*, *Mademoiselle* and other magazines. Her first book was *Cry of the Peacocks*. She has been Poet-in-Residence at Kirkland College and currently conducts poetry workshops at Queens College and SUNY at Purchase. She is at work on a new novel.

Jay Meek has contributed poems to a number of journals. He teaches writing workshops at SUNY, Courtland and at University College, Syracuse University.

Eric Overmyer is from the Pacific Northwest and currently lives in Portland, Oregon. He has sporadically attended Reed College and was a Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Mass. where he wrote this poem. This is his first appearance in print.

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Peter Payack is currently in Cambridge, Mass., compiling and editing an anthology of science-oriented poems. His poems have appeared in *The Village Voice*, *The Goddard Journal*, *The Paris Review* #61, and other magazines. *Cornucopia*, a pamphlet of fourteen of his poems, was recently published by *The New York Culture Review Press* which is also publishing his forthcoming chapbook, *The White Line*.

Steven Rea's poetry has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *New York Quarterly*, the Doubleday anthology *Intro 6* and several small magazines. These poems were written in France and England where he spent last autumn. He is 22 years old and lives in California.

Dennis Schmitz is the author of *We Weep for Our Strangeness* (Big Table, 1969). His new book, *Goodwill, Inc.* will be coming out in the Ecco Press Series in late 1975.

W. I. Scobie has had poems published in *Encounter*, *The London Magazine* and elsewhere. He interviewed Christopher Isherwood for *The Paris Review* #57 and currently writes for the *London Observer* from Santa Monica, California.

Albert Stainton is co-editor of *Bartleby's Review*. His work has been published in *Poetry Now*, *Truck*, *Epoch*, *Shaman* and is forthcoming in *Poetry*, *Cafe Solo*, *The Seneca Review* and others. His chapbook, *The Crossing*, was published last fall and he is currently working on a book-length manuscript. He lives in Machias, Maine.

Barry Yourgrau has held a variety of jobs including newspaper reporting and laboring in municipal departments of public works in two states. His writing has appeared in *Oink!*. He now lives in the Cambridge, Mass. area. This is his first appearance in *The Paris Review*.

ART

Christo (Javachef) was born in Gabravo, Bulgaria in 1935. In 1958 he moved to Paris and began the first of his "Packages" and "Wrapped Objects." In 1964, he and his wife Jeanne-Claude and their son moved to New York City. His more recent projects include "Valley Curtain" in Rifle, Colorado (1971-72) about which the Maysles brothers made a movie, and "Ocean Front" in Newport, Rhode Island (1974).

Donald Evans was born in 1945 in Morristown, New Jersey. He holds a degree in architecture from Cornell and worked as an architectural designer and project supervisor for Richard Meier and Associates. In 1972 he moved to Holland where he began making stamps. They have appeared in numerous group and one-man shows in Europe and most recently in a one-man show at the Fischbach Gallery, Spring 1975. He currently lives in Amsterdam.

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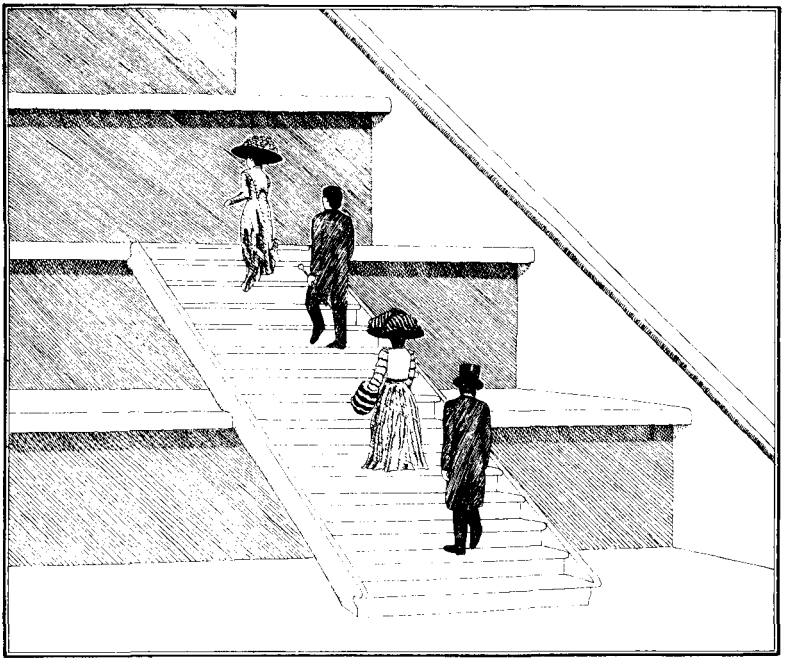
Shadow is an artist and theater designer who lives in New York City. He recently co-authored *Wanted: Billy the Kid* for which he is now writing the screenplay. He has created costumes for over twenty productions in St. Louis, New York City, and elsewhere and his designs have been exhibited at both the New York and London Wright-Hepburn Galleries. He is currently represented in the Lincoln Center exhibition, "Contemporary Stage Design, U.S.A." He has taught Theatre Design and Period Movement Styles at City College in London.

Jonathan Weld is a young artist. He lives in New York.



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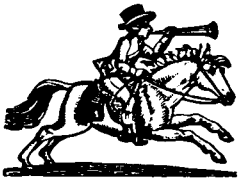

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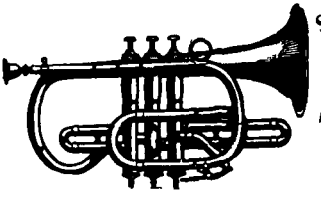

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